TRANSLATING NATIONAL STANDARDS INTO PRACTICE FOR THE INITIAL TRAINING OF FURTHER EDUCATION TEACHERS IN ENGLAND

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Abstract

Translating national standards into practice for the initial training of further education teachers in England

Over the last decade the system for training further education (FE) teachers in England has been the subject of almost, continuous government reform. Central to the reforms has been the definition of national standards as the foundation for qualifications and initial teacher training (ITT). This thesis explores how standards for FE teachers are translated as they move between the worlds of policy makers, qualification designers, teacher educators and teacher trainees. The term 'translation' suggests that many actors are involved in interpreting and using standards as they cross organizational boundaries. Socio-cultural perspectives, from the Vygotskian tradition, are employed to analyse how standards conceived of as a cultural tool are mediated in the different contexts that they enter. In attempting to unravel different aspects of this process, the research addresses both policy and pedagogical issues. It concludes that the former Department of Education and Skills (DfES), its successor departments and related government agencies have placed too much reliance on the use of standards as a tool for reforming teacher-education. There is little evidence to suggest that the definition of national standards has led to a common interpretation of what trainee-teachers are expected to achieve or enriched their experience of learning to teach. Whilst it is too early to evaluate the impact of the revised LLUK standards, as cultural artefacts they share many similar features with the FENTO standards. Although this thesis concentrates upon the impact of the introduction of standards on the initial training of FE teachers, the central thrust of analysing how standards are mediated as they move between the domains of policy and pedagogy has wider relevance because of the continued reliance of governments on standards-led reform.

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GLOSSARY

CBET	Competence Based Education and Training
CETT	Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training
CTLLS	Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DTTLS	Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
EOT	Equipping our Teachers for the Future
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FESDF	Further Education Staff Development Forum
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organization
FETT	Further Education Teacher Training
IfL	Institute for Learning
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAB	National Awarding Body
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NTO	National Training Organization
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PTTLS	Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCF	Qualification and Credit Framework
TTA	Teacher Training Agency for Schools
TDA	Teacher Development Agency for Schools
SfL	Skills for Life
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SVUK	Standards Verification UK
UCET	Universities Council for the Education of Teachers

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 1999, national standards for teaching and supporting learning (FENTO, 1999) in further education (FE) were published by a newly-created national agency, the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO). The standards represented an important historical milestone, in that they were the first attempt at a national level to define in great detail[1] the many professional roles and functions of FE teachers. They were embodied in the 2001 statutory instrument that introduced a requirement (2001b) for all new FE teachers to undertake a nationally approved initial teaching qualification, based upon the standards. The introduction of this requirement led to a flurry of activity involving the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), national agencies, such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), National Awarding Bodies (NABs), and employer, professional and trade union groups. Since 1999, the scope and scale of central intervention in the initial training of FE teachers, and indeed the training of trainers and tutors from wider Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) has increased. Additional specialist standards for teachers of adult literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) have been introduced (DfES and FENTO, 2002a; LLUK, 2007a). Reforming the national system for the training teachers also became a central theme of the DfES 'Success for All Strategy' (DfES, 2002) which had the broad aim of improving the standards of teaching in the life long learning sector. Following a critical HMI survey of FE teacher training (OFSTED, 2003b), the DfES conducted a major national consultation (DfES, 2003c) on ITT and then announced further reforms to the national system of training (DfES, 2004a). These most recent reforms commonly referred to as 'Equipping our Teachers'(EOT) have culminated in a new set of standards (LLUK, 2006a), qualification guidance (LLUK, 2007b) and qualifications. Before 1999, it might have been accurate to describe the government's approach as one of benign neglect

[1] The FENTO standards contained over 290 standards, sub-standards, personal attributes, skills and areas of understanding.

(Young et. al. 1995) to what was essentially a voluntary system of teacher training. This description would not be an apt representation of the current position.

1.2 Theoretical orientation

In attempting to unravel the complex journey, that takes place in the translation of national regulations and standards, from government to colleges and trainees, the research involves a detailed examination of both the policy context in which standards have been developed and the pedagogy of the FE college workplace (Billett, 2002; Billett, 2004; Daniels, 2001; Fuller, 2005; Fuller and Unwin, 2004; Hodkinson and James, 2003) where standards are related to ITT qualifications and training programmes. The thesis explores the connection, often tenuous, between policy as conceived within the machinery of government and policy as perceived and received by those – trainees, teachers and managers – who work and learn in FE colleges.

Given this breadth of focus, this thesis draws upon a wide literature: official publications, the policy field, theories of learning and studies of competence-based education and training (CBET) and teacher professionalism. A conceptual framework is developed rooted in the rich Vygotskian socio-cultural tradition. Standards are conceptualised as cultural tools designed to cross the boundaries between different policy, educational, and training contexts. The key question that arises is do they translate? What happens to them when they cross the boundaries of governmental and educational organisations with quite different purposes and traditions? How are they used by individuals and organisations working within an increasingly regulated system?

Drawing upon Wertsch (1998), a distinction is made between the production and consumption of standards. The notion of production of a cultural tool, focuses attention on the policy context in which the tool (standards) emerged and the historical tradition whose assumptions and purposes it reflects. Part of the research involved investigating the roles of key players such as DfES and national agencies,

such as FENTO, LLUK and QCA in the evolution of policy linked to standards and what they hoped to achieve. An exploration of the production of a cultural tool also involves more deep-seated questions such as unravelling the different traditions embodied in the FENTO and LLUK standards and placing them within the wider history of standards-led educational reforms. This historical emphasis reflects a Vygotskian tradition of tracing the socio-genesis of mediating artefacts. Standards are treated as cultural tools that have been developed with a particular purpose and within a particular historical context.

The question of consumption directs attention to the ways in which individual agents, for example, National Awarding Bodies (NABs), teacher educators and trainees have interpreted the standards and applied them in the distinctive contexts that they inhabit such as the FE workplace. Vygotskian perspectives are particularly apt for analysing the consumption of the standards because they link the transmission of knowledge, of which standards are a part[2], to the immediacy of context. Knowledge and learning are situated in the work situations in which the teachers learn to teach. This approach is particularly apposite for this group of adult learners, not least, because they bring to the learning situation their own complex biographies and previous work experience. It is apt also for researching the knowledge and skills of early-career FE teachers because their work involves blending theoretical, organizational and personal knowledge (Eraut, 2005b) that is adapted to the unique situations in which they teach and learn. There is a growing literature on learning in the workplace that I have drawn upon to examine how standards are mediated in the work contexts of trainee-teachers. This literature ranges from anthropologically-based theories of social practice – for example that on Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) to Marxist perspectives that focus upon the collective context - the activity systems (Engeström, 1995; Engeström, 1999a; Engeström, 2000; Engeström, 2001) in which learning takes place. In my thesis I review literature from both these traditions and draw most heavily on post-Vygotskian studies of workplace learning (Billet 2002 and 2004, Fuller and Unwin, 2004) that have already synthesized elements from this area.

[2] I am using knowledge in a wide sense here that includes both subject and occupational aspects.

The word 'translation' that is used in the title of my thesis, serves as a useful embarkation point in that it concentrates initial attention on standards as semiotic devices, that carry all the inherent difficulties of attempting to communicate complex meanings and 'desirable' behaviour in the form of text - long lists of words. In the thesis I shift from the notion of translation to mediation. I attempt to treat standards within the Vygotskian triad of subject, object and cultural tool (Daniels, 2001). My focus is upon investigating how standards as a particular cultural tool provide both affordances and constraints for those who use them in designing qualifications, curricula and training programmes. A wide conception of pedagogy has been adopted which reflects the above emphasis upon mediation. Davydov (1995, p.17) notes that:

> "Vygotsky did not recognise the presence of some separate reality containing only the teacher and child. He singled out and studied the dynamic social surroundings that connect the teacher and child."

If the words teacher-educator and trainee are substituted for teacher and child, then the above extract reflects a key aim of this research. That is to locate the development of FE trainees' pedagogical practice in the dynamic context of the FE college and to consider in what ways, if at all, their practice is afforded or constrained by the standards and regulations (2001a) for their ITT qualifications. This approach is particularly apt because all of the trainees interviewed as part of this research were deeply involved, either through full-time, part-time teaching or placement in FE colleges.

More generally the whole thrust of situated learning approaches are to connect the learning of adults to the workplaces in which it takes place (Evans and Rainbird, 2002; Guille and Griffiths, 2001; Wertsch, 1998). In his own work, Vygotsky (Vygotsky and Luria, 1994) envisaged that cultural tools could take many forms. They could be material artefacts such as buildings, equipment and physical tools,

semiotic artefacts[3] such as signs, symbols and of course language, and other people such as teacher educators, managers and co-workers. In the analysis of the development of trainees' pedagogical practice all three types of cultural tool are important to understanding how learning to teach is mediated in the immediacy of the FE workplace and how it connects to wider factors such as ITT regulations and the economic constraints faced by colleges. Theories and empirical studies in the socio-cultural tradition are helpful in that they provide a powerful way of linking wider historical and cultural factors to the immediacy of learning in a particular context.

1.3 Empirical aspects

Given the focus upon the mediation of standards as they move between different policy and pedagogical contexts, the research involved the collection of data from different organizations and participants working at national and local levels.

Figure 1: Overview of different levels of the research

DfES: different policy teams (e.g. ITT/Workforce development, Skills for Life)
Government agencies: QCA, LLUK, FENTO, TDA
Representative groups: universities (UCET), college employers (AOC), trade unions (NATFHE)
Qualifications: HEIs, City & Guilds, other national awarding bodies
ITT Curriculum/training programmes: HEIs, FE colleges
FE Workplace: experiences of teacher-trainees of workplace

The data were collected through three main activities:

[3] Standards are a type of semiotic artefact

- analysis of documentation and supplementary interviews with individuals involved at a national level with policy making and regulation of ITT qualifications
- analysis of documentation, together with supporting interviews and other forms of data collection at two contrasting college sites
- national surveys of FE teacher training in 2003 and 2006 linked to my former role as an HMI, attendance at DfES, LLUK and other policy meetings.

The first and second of these arose from my position as a part-time research student, the third linked to my former professional role

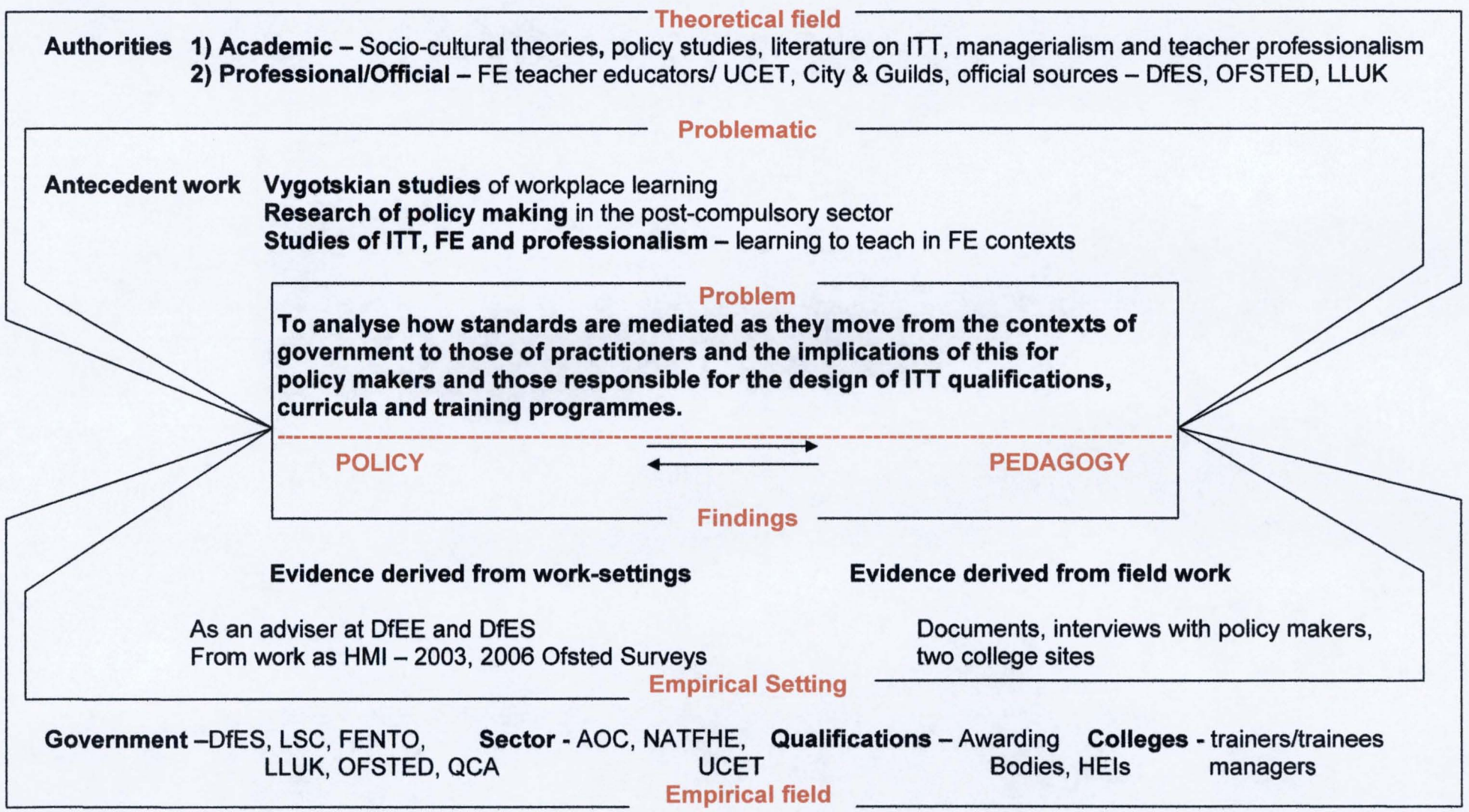
1.4 Connecting the theoretical and empirical aspects

Figure 2 on the next page[4] provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical aspects (Brown and Dowling, 1998) of the thesis. As well as pointing to the main theoretical resources that have informed the research, the diagram illustrates that a key part of the field work was based at two college sites where the focus was on interviewing trainees, trainers and managers[5] so as to gather evidence about the processes by which standards are translated into curricula, training programmes and work practices. This evidence was supplemented by interviews with national policy makers and analysis of key policies and documents.

[4] The figure is based upon the one on p.144 of Brown, A. & Dowling, P. (1998) *Doing Research/Reading Research – A Mode of Interrogation for Education* (London, Falmer Press)

[5] The fieldwork took place mainly between 2003 and 2006 and included an inner-city and provincial college.

Figure 2 - From policy to pedagogy – mediation of standards



The diagram indicates that part of the empirical setting for the research is derived from my own professional experience over the last 30 years. Prior to joining the Institute of Education in January 2006 as a lecturer and now Director of the London Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training, I was employed as a senior HMI in OFSTED where I was responsible for the inspection of FE teacher training. I was the main author of the 2003 and 2006 HMI survey reports (OFSTED, 2003b; OFSTED, 2006) on FE teacher education. Between them these surveys involved the collection of evidence from 20 higher education institutions (HEIs) working in ITT partnerships with over 50 colleges. It also involved meetings and the analysis of documentation from DfES, awarding bodies, QCA, LLUK and FENTO. This survey data, although gathered for the purposes of inspection[6], rather than for research provided invaluable context for my fieldwork. Throughout the period of my research, I have maintained contact with officials from DfES, FENTO, LLUK and NABs and I have been intimately connected with the reforms linked to Equipping our Teachers (DfES, 2004a). Between 1997 and 1999, I also worked as a full-time adviser at the DfES, on post-compulsory education and training. I was involved in the consultation leading to the publication of the FENTO standards in 1999 and the introduction of the 2001 statutory requirement. In earlier phases of my career, I have taught trainee teachers, designed qualifications for them in partnership with a college and a regional university and co-authored an established textbook for PGCE students (Gray, Griffin and Nasta, 2005)

The basic idea that sparked the thesis emerged whilst I was working as a DfES adviser. My key role during this period was to help policy teams to understand what they perceived as the 'real world' of colleges, qualifications and students, to try to link the worlds of policy and pedagogy. I was a sort of translator. My purpose was to make meaningful to civil servants the world of FE they were seeking to reform and improve. Although the research is concerned with the impact of the introduction of standards on one particular

[6] Some of the comparisons and contrasts between knowledge gained from inspection and research are discussed in Chapter 4.

group of adult learners – teachers in FE, the central thrust of analysing how standards are mediated as they move between contexts has much wider applicability. Within both compulsory and post-compulsory education, governments of different political hues have adopted the approach of specifying standards and related targets centrally and then relying upon a range of intermediary bodies, often operating on a contracted-out basis to government departments (Ainley and Bailey, 1997) to implement policy. This approach chimes with 'the politics of the third way' (Giddens, 1998). It is particularly prevalent in PCET where governments have historically relied upon indirect approaches to reform. This thesis provides one case study of the effects of this type of intervention. Studies of reforms to the system of vocational qualifications (Raggatt and Williams, 1999) often demonstrate the gap between policy intentions and policy consequences. This examination of how standards and regulations undergo metamorphosis as they move between contexts may also heighten the importance to policy makers of studying the complex relationship between policy and context, without which many good intentions flounder.

1.5 Guide to chapters

The literature, both academic sources and official publications, in which the thesis is rooted, is reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 provides a brief history of the FENTO and LLUK standards and the wider policy and social traditions that they embody. The analysis shows how complex and conflicting strands of policy development became woven into the standards. Chapter 3 portrays pedagogical traditions in FE and questions whether it is possible to capture teachers' knowledge in the form of written standards. Chapter 4 links the academic literature to the research conception and design and provides an outline of the research methodology. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the mediation of standards in the policy context, first by considering the standards as a policy text and second by considering how they were mediated into legal and inspection regulations and qualification frameworks. Chapters 7 and 8 start from the pedagogical spaces of two contrasting colleges and evaluate

how standards were themselves mediated in these two workplaces. The final chapter draws together the argument by evaluating the effectiveness of standards as a tool for bridging the domains of policy and pedagogy and provides a self-evaluation of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2 - ORIGINS AND POLICY CONTEXT

"The intentions of a tool are what it does. A hammer intends to strike; a vice intends to hold fast, a lever intends to lift. They are what it is made for. But sometimes a tool may have other uses that you don't know. Sometimes undoing what you intend, you also do what the knife intends without knowing it." (Pullman, 2001, p.190)

2.1 Introduction

This research raises fundamental questions about educational standards in general and the FENTO and LLUK standards in particular.

- What are they?
- What and whose purposes are they meant to serve?
- How has the policy and social context in which they have evolved influenced their nature and functions?
- What evidence do we have that they have served the purpose of those who were responsible for their creation or improved the experiences of those for whom they were designed?
- What intrinsic issues arise in attempts to codify the knowledge and activities of teachers in the form of long lists of written statements?

This is the first of two chapters that open the debate on these questions by reviewing the academic literature and official sources. In this chapter, the evolution of the FENTO and LLUK standards over the last decade is described. They are placed in the wider tradition of standards linked to occupational competence and criterion-based assessment. Running through the discussion is the idea that standards are cultural tools that reflect the social and historical context in which they have evolved. Authorities in the Vygotskian tradition, for example (Rogoff, 2003; Wertsch, 1985; Wertsch, 1998) emphasise that the political, social and historical legacy embodied in a cultural tool is fundamental to understanding the affordances and constraints that it offers to those who use it. Examining the formation of the FENTO and LLUK standards is a complex task because the pace of policy innovation

since 1997 has been rapid and bewildering as 'New Labour Governments' have intervened using different policy levers to regulate PCET. The fact that there have been two sets of standards and associated qualification requirements for FE teachers between 1997-2007 when in the previous 100 years there were none is illustrative of this pace. Treating standards as products of particular historical and political circumstances is different from treating them as if they were absolute yardsticks which can be applied to assess the diverse practices of FE teachers. In Pullman's story, the wielder of the 'subtle knife,' a physical tool designed to allow its owner to open the boundaries between different worlds, is not aware of its origin and purpose (Pullman, 2001). The subtle knife proves to be a dangerous and clumsy tool when used by the uninitiated. Many educational policy makers and qualification designers may have made use of standards in a similarly uncritical fashion assuming that they are fit for purposes that they cannot achieve. Unravelling their origins is an important first step in evaluating how effectively, if at all, they have crossed the boundaries between the worlds of policy and pedagogy.

2.2 Origins

The FENTO and LLUK standards have an immediate, a 'short history' in the sense that they have been introduced during the last decade. They also have a deeper and 'longer history' in that their development reflects more enduring features of the relationship between government and PCET. The short history is linked with policies of New Labour Governments since 1997 and the use of educational standards, associated requirements and targets as instruments to regulate the provision of public services. Their longer history is complex and multi-faceted. It reflects a deep-seated tradition of making policies for FE, training and vocational education in isolation from wider education policies for schools and higher education (Aldrich, Crook and Watson, 2000; Green, 1990; Raggatt and Williams, 1999). It reflects the increasing trend of government regulation of education and training linked paradoxically to the emphasis upon a quasi-market for education (Hodgson and Spours, 2006). This was already, well-established before Labour came to power in 1997. It

reflects the influence of an industrial model of training where standards are seen as occupational outcomes - competencies that can be defined with precision by employer groups (Wolf, 1995). Although this latter tradition has been influential in shaping the FENTO and LLUK standards, I will argue that they are more than occupational standards. They straddle, albeit uneasily, a competence tradition and other approaches to learning and professionalism. The narrative that follows takes as its immediate focus the chronology of events over the last decade and places this against the wider backcloth of deep-seated policy traditions embodied in the standards. In an international comparison of how educational standards are perceived, Wolf argues that it is essential to analyse a country's social, historical and political traditions to understand their functions and nature (Wolf, 2000). In the sections which follow, I will attempt to follow her advice.

End of the voluntary system

The New Labour Government of 1997 inherited a voluntary system of teacher training. ITT for FE teachers was largely unregulated by the state, in contrast to schools, where a statutory requirement for a teaching qualification was mandatory (Teacher Training Agency, 2002). In a detailed historical study, Lucas recounts (Lucas, 2002; Lucas, 2004) the many official enquiries (Haycocks, 1975; McNair, 1944) that drew attention to need for reform. One of the most comprehensive of these, the Haycocks Report [7]provided an extremely penetrating analysis of the issues and commented:

> "The absence of a pre-service training requirement for teachers in further education has led to a variety of methods to encourage teachers to train voluntarily." (p.3)

> "The deficiencies in the present situation hardly need to be stated, since they are well recognised and have been for so many years. The need for professional teacher training in further education establishments is as great as that in the schools."
> (Haycocks, 1975, p.5)

[7] Haycocks was a former chair of the University Council of Teachers (UCET) on the Training of Teachers for Further Education. He coordinated the work of a sub-committee advising the then Department of Education and Science on the Supply and Training of Teachers.

Haycocks went on to make a series of recommendations including the requirement for a compulsory induction year for new and unqualified entrants, recognizing the need for a comprehensive in-service system of ITT. He also went on to chair two committees that produced two further reports on the training needs of part-time teachers (known as Haycocks Two) and managers in FE (Haycocks Three). These reports illustrated that the issues were well known to experts in the field, but successive governments were content to leave the system largely alone.

Given this background, the publication of the Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998b), one year into the New Labour administration, marked a critical break. It signalled the intention of introducing statutory requirements and standards for FE teachers, comparable to the regulatory framework (DfEE, 1998d; Teacher Training Agency, 2002) applying to school teachers. New Labour inherited a policy landscape characterised by increasing intervention by the state in both compulsory and post-compulsory education. The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, passed by the previous Conservative administration, represented a major step in transition from what Ainley (2001, p. 457) describes as "a national system of education locally administered to a national system nationally administered." The creation of FEFC in 1993 ended the system of LEA control of FE colleges that had been in place since the 1944 Education Act and replaced it with incorporated and supposedly more independent FE Colleges. Control of funding and inspection became the responsibility of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) whose activities in turn were tightly monitored by the DfEE. By 1997, FEFC had introduced a national unit-based funding regime where each college's allocation was closely linked to the recruitment, retention and achievement of students (FEFC, 1992). This was a huge break with the former LEA funding system where the allocation of funding was based upon historical practice and there was wide variation in the levels of resources provided by LEAs. The new FEFC Inspectorate had also published a series of reports (FEFC, 1995; FEFC, 1997) commenting upon what inspectors perceived as the poor quality of teaching, learning and student retention in FE.

Within the wider context of educational policy, New Labour had already set up the *Standards and Effectiveness Unit for Schools* under Professor Michael Barber and indicated that the improving the quality of teaching, learning and attainment were central aims within its overall mantra of 'education, education, education'. Given these factors it was unsurprising that the rationale for government intervention in FE teacher training was firmly associated with improving teaching standards.

> "We propose, working with colleges, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) to:
>
> - ensure better teaching. Our aim is that all new teachers in further education should hold, or within two years of appointment have begun, a recognised teacher training qualification."
>
> (DfEE 1998, p. 58)

This theme was strengthened in the I999 White Paper, 'Learning to Succeed', in which the introduction of a qualification requirement for new FE teachers was confirmed. Indeed the Government identified for itself the responsibility for taking the reform forward (DfEE, 1999a):

> "In one area in particular, the Government itself will take the lead. Building on the work of FENTO...it will lead the development of a range of qualifications for all post-16 teaching and training staff. New requirements will be introduced as to the level of qualification which different categories of staff should obtain and the time which this should take"
>
> (DfEE 1999, p.46)

The task that DfEE set for itself of introducing common requirements and standards was exceedingly complex. What it was attempting was to standardize requirements for teachers in a sector where diversity was, and remains, the abiding characteristic (Gray, Griffin and Nasta, 2005). Diversity was reflected in the range of institutions that provided courses from small specialist agricultural and art colleges, to tertiary institutions to large multi-site FE colleges (HMSO, 1998). There was diversity, in the huge range of

vocational qualifications on offer, over 5,000 of them that had evolved in a market-based qualifications system (Raggatt and Williams, 1999) where NABs had historically competed with each other (Ecclestone, 1996). Probably most important of all, there was diversity in the range of occupations from which FE teachers were drawn and the mix there was between full-time, proportionate and part-time teachers. In contrast to school teachers who generally have linear career trajectories, FE teachers' career profiles, as adult learners, are rich and complex. For most, teaching is a second career and as several studies of teacher professionalism (Lucas, 2002; Robson, 1998a; Robson, 1998b; Robson, 2006) have shown, there is a powerful tendency to identify with original occupations, rather than to develop a professional identity as FE teachers. DfEE's stated aim of strengthening professionalism that has continued to be a major theme in successive waves of ITT reform was therefore exceedingly ambitious.

FENTO and the industrial model of setting standards

Many commentators (Coffield et al., 2005; Keep, 2006; McNair et al., 2003) have pointed out that because the work of FE straddles 14-19 education, HE, vocational and work-based training, skills-for-life and community learning, it inevitably gets embroiled in different, and often conflicting policy agendas. Labour's plans for reforming ITT quickly got caught up with another priority for reform, the plan to rationalize the system of NVQs and the associated industry lead body structure. In their study of the evolution of policy on vocational qualifications, (Raggatt and Williams, 1999) trace the complex mix of regulation, market-based awarding bodies and employer-lead bodies that that had emerged by the 1990s. They paint a complex picture where successive governments concerned with a low-skills equilibrium (Finegold and Soskice, 1988), the relationship between inadequate vocational education and training, low skills levels and poor economic performance developed a complex mix of policy levers, including qualifications reform to regulate a market system which was perceived to be deficient in raising the skills levels of the workforce.

A key strand in this mix was the development of qualifications based upon 'employer' definitions of standards expressed as occupational outcomes. This distinct 'training' tradition can be traced back to the approach of the former Manpower Services Commission (MSC), a body established in 1973 that had managed government-training and developed approaches such as the *New Training Initiative* (MSC, 1985a) that related government funding to targets based on occupational outcomes. The MSC tradition paved the way (MSC, 1985b) for the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in 1987 to rationalise the cumbersome UK system of vocational qualifications and base National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) on the demonstration of competence in the workplace (Robinson, 1996). An integral aspect of the NCVQ system were 150 industry-lead bodies, ostensibly[8] made up of employer representatives that had the task of specifying occupational standards founded upon a functional analysis of performance in the workplace. Wolf (1995) points out that the emergence of competency-based education and training was strongly related to the desire of politicians for greater accountability of expenditure on education and training, to make public funding dependent on the achievement of qualifications linked to standards. I shall critique competence-based approaches in Chapter 5 when I evaluate the extent to which the FENTO and LLUK standards can be seen as occupational outcomes. For now I want to concentrate on how this model based upon occupational standards was related to the formation of FENTO and indeed has continued into its successor bodies, Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and Standards Verification UK (SVUK).

By 1997, the NCVQ system had become the subject of intense criticism and the Government accepted the case for further reform. NCVQ was merged with the Schools Standards and Assessment Body to form QCA in 1997. Control of NVQs passed to QCA which still has responsibility for the approval and regulation of qualifications, outside the HE sector. Both the academic literature, for example (Eraut, 1994; Hodkinson, 1995; Lum, 1999; Raggatt

[8] I will deal with the issue of the extent to which lead bodies, NTOs and SSCs engage employers later in the thesis.

and Williams, 1999; Tarrant, 2000; Wolf, 1995) and official reports (Beaumont, 1995; FEFC, 1995; FEFC, 1997) were highly critical of the unwieldiness of the vocational qualification system and the huge overlap between standards being set by different industry lead bodies. DfEE moved quickly to rationalize the system by announcing that over 150 lead bodies would be replaced by 75 National training Organisations (NTOs) with more cogent groupings of employment sectors to continue the task of determining occupational standards. Despite this rationalisation, the principle of employers determining standards remained sacrosanct. In an ambitious prospectus for NTOs (DfEE, 1998c) stated:

> "Each NTO shall become the automatically preferred point of reference of strategic leadership and practical guidance about skills and qualifications needs for a defined employment sector/and or range of occupations, and how the learning needs of people can be met through training and education."
>
> (ibid, p.5)

The establishment of FENTO in 1999 has to be set against this wider policy canvas. It was linked to the immediate goal of rationalizing lead bodies, but reflected a much older tradition, the MSC industrial model of employers setting standards. In 1997, DfEE established the Further Education Staff Development Forum (FESDF), the predecessor body to FENTO with the brief of setting standards as the basis for qualifications for FE teachers and other staff, for example managers and governors, working in FE. The task of FESDF was exceedingly complex. Given the legacy of a voluntary system, a huge diversity of approaches towards ITT had developed across HE and FE providers and awarding bodies. These ranged from competence-based qualifications, run by some universities and by City & Guilds (the former 7306 Teaching Certificate) to Cert. Ed and PGCE programmes modelled on the concept of the reflective practitioner (Harkin, 2005; Kay and Johnson, 2002). A report for the Association of Colleges (Young et al., 1995) highlighted the complete lack of standardisation of ITT (FE) qualifications that were offered at different academic levels and had quite different subject content. Within the DfEE, where I was working as a full-time FE adviser, it was apparent that

there were huge gaps in knowledge about provision. Basic data, for example about the proportion of FE staff that held ITT qualifications were unreliable. Although the FEFC had introduced a data-collection system, the Staff-Individualised Record, few colleges provided reliable information on staff. Other agencies, for example, the Higher Education Statistical Agency and awarding bodies such as City & Guilds were able to provide partial information, for example about enrolments on ITT qualifications.

Notwithstanding these problems, FESDF with funding and encouragement from the DfEE started to develop occupational standards for FE teachers. Initially FESDF drew upon earlier consultancy work in the occupational-competency tradition (DfEE and FEDA, 1995)[9]. This had produced a complex functional map of all the occupational roles, teaching and non-teaching in FE colleges with intricate detail of job titles, domains and competencies. FESDF also drew upon the precedent established through the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) that had established a range of competence-based assessor and verifier qualifications for staff teaching NVQs and GNVQs. Early drafts of the standards for FE teachers reflected the NVQ approach, indeed as Lucas (2003) recounts they were referred to as competencies. The attempt to base the standards on occupational outcomes met with stiff opposition from teacher-educators from FE and HE. By the late 1990s a well-developed critique of competence based qualifications had emerged, for example (Bathmaker, 1999; Ecclestone, 1997; Eraut, 1994; Hodkinson, 1995; Hodkinson, 1998; Hyland, 1997; Lum, 1999; Wolf, 1995) founded on the experiences of teaching and researching NVQs and the MSC training schemes. This critique rejected what was viewed as the crude reductionism of approaches that described the activities of professional workers in behavioural terms. The quote from Hyland below was fairly typical of the views being expressed by HE teacher-educators at the time the FENTO standards were being developed.

[9] I will look in detail at the NVQ model for deriving occupational standards in Chapter 5 when I explore the detail of both the FENTO and LLUK standards.

> "Competence strategies serve to de-skill and de-professionalise teaching and other public service occupations by their technicist and reductionist approach to human values and knowledge."
>
> (Hyland, 1997, p.491)

Most ITT qualifications for FE staff were rooted in the model of the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983), which highlights the tacit, unpredictable and intuitive elements of professional work and the need to adjust and refine professional practice through critical reflection. Indeed it has been argued that in the absence of a knowledge base rooted in individual subject disciplines, reflective practice was seen by many FE teacher educators as the 'credo' of the ITT curriculum (Harkin, 2005).

Running in parallel with scholarly critiques of NVQ-type models were several official reports from the FEFC Inspectorate and other public inquiries that highlighted practical problems of teaching and assessing competence-based qualifications given their minute dissection of occupational roles into hundreds of performance criteria. A series of national survey reports from the FEFC Inspectorate (FEFC, 1995; FEFC, 1997; FEFC, 2000a) pointed to the complexity of applying these standards in teaching and assessment:

> "Once set by awarding bodies, standards are subject to interpretation by teachers, trainers and assessors. This interpretation is in turn influenced by the teachers' expertise and experience, as well as their expectations of students. The professional expertise of assessors, verifiers and moderators is similarly of critical importance to the maintenance of standards."
>
> (FEFC 1997, p.7)

The inspectorate argued that the creation of qualifications based on precise occupational standards had not led to consistency in assessment practice. In addition the bureaucracy (Beaumont, 1995) associated with long NVQ specifications and elongated assessment processes involving assessors, internal and external verifiers was seen as burdensome. I have so far skimmed over this important literature and I will return to it in more detail in Chapter 5 when I examine the text of the standards and evaluate these

different strands. For now I merely wish to stress the intense disagreement within FE and HE about how the standards should be specified.

From Standards to the 2001 Qualification Requirements

By the time FENTO was officially launched as a new NTO in 1999, the standards had been through 8 consultative drafts. Whilst the earlier drafts were firmly in the competence tradition, the final set (FENTO, 1999) tried to reconcile the narrow occupational model with wider professional approaches. FENTO described the purposes of the standards in the following terms:

- "to provide an agreed set of standards that can be used to inform the design of accredited awards for FE teachers, validated within the national qualifications framework by HEIs or other awarding bodies
- to provide standards that can be used to inform professional development activity within FE
- to assist institution-based activities such as recruitment, appraisal and the identification of training needs."

(FENTO, 1999, p.2).

The second and third of these purposes illustrate that providing standards for the design of ITT was seen as one function. Standards had broader purposes such as informing professional development and recruitment practice. The first statement makes clear that processes by which standards are translated into qualifications is dependant upon national qualification frameworks and the roles of awarding bodies. Converting standards into 'workable' qualifications is critical and problematic. It involves defining which groups of staff within the complex teaching workforce of FE the different standards should be applicable to and attempting to resolve difficult issues about the academic level that qualifications should be pitched at. These issues could not be resolved by FENTO or DfEE alone. They involved difficult negotiation with funding agencies and those responsible for developing and regulating qualifications - HEIs, NABs and QCA.

Relating standards to FE teachers was and remains complex because of the huge reliance of colleges on part-time teachers. An FEFC Report of 1999-2000 on the support for part-time teachers in FE estimated that part-time teachers made-up two-thirds of the FE workforce and were responsible for teaching one-third of lessons (FEFC, 2000b). The report found that many part-time staff were not well supported. Many lacked basic amenities such as access to desks, working spaces and IT. A study of part-time teachers in the East Midlands (Rothwell, 2002) presents a picture of the marginalised nature of part-time teachers and their vulnerability in incorporated FE colleges where their employment and disposal reflected a more aggressive managerial approach to cutting unit costs given a tight FEFC funding regime. Later and more detailed research for the LSDA (Hillier and Jameson, 2004) comments in detail about their marginalisation:

> "Part-time staff experience relatively low rates of pay, inadequate office space and facilities, and limited access to staff development and training. The sectoral implications are that the role of part-time staff appears to be a 'ragged' one, situated insecurely on the margins of many institutions"
>
> (ibid, p.1)

In deciding how to frame requirements for FE teachers, DfEE had to consider how to relate standards to this marginalised majority in FE. The issue of what academic level to pitch the qualification requirement was also fundamental, given the range of prior qualifications of FE teachers. Before the introduction of a statutory requirement, there was not a uniform approach to calibrating ITT courses against either the levels of HE awards or those defined in the National Qualifications Framework. City & Guilds teaching certificates which had traditionally catered for in-service teachers with craft qualifications and experience were set at level 3, whilst most Cert. Ed and PGCE courses were set at level 4 (first-year degree level) or above. Given the desire for raising professional status and of achieving greater parity between FE and school teachers that were predominantly graduates, QCA decided in 2001 to calibrate ITT qualifications for FE teachers at a minimum of level 4. As I will

show in Chapter 6, the issue of academic level has had a profound effect on the nature of the ITT curriculum.

In an attempt to find a resolution to these issues DfEE consulted on a three-stage model of standards and linked qualifications (DfEE, 2000). The standards were disaggregated into an introduction stage designed for part-time teachers with a small, but regular teaching commitment, an intermediate stage for part-time teachers with more substantial teaching and a full certification stage for full-time teachers and others whose role required the full range of standards. In many ways this proposed division was conservative in that it was modelled on stage 1 and stage 2 City & Guilds teaching certificates and stage 3 on the Cert. Ed/PGCE qualifications. DfEE's idea of disaggregating standards according to role and employment status was new. It had not figured in any of the initial consultations about the standards. I will explore the implications of breaking down 'holistic' standards in this way in Chapter 5. A year later under the enabling legislation of the Educational Reform Act 1988, Statutory Instrument 2001, 1209 on FE Teachers' Qualifications came into force (2001a). It introduced the following requirements for new FE teachers that followed the model proposed in the consultation.

- All new unqualified teachers who become employed to teach an FE course leading to a nationally recognised qualification at an FE college would be required to hold, or work towards and achieve in a specified time, a recognised qualification appropriate to their role.
- Unqualified new full-time and fractional FE teachers would be required to gain a university Certificate in Education or equivalent within 2-4 years (2 years for full time teachers: 4 years for those on fractional contracts depending on hours worked).
- Unqualified new part-time teachers not on fractional contracts would be required to achieve a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Teaching Certificate – according to role (Stage 1 within one year, Stage 2 within 2 years).

- DfES required all courses leading to an FE teaching qualification to be based upon FENTO standards and endorsed by FENTO as doing so.

Although the above division made a reference to the requirement for part-time teachers to gain a stage 1 or 2 qualification according to role, the exact nature of this role was never properly defined in the legislation. It was instead translated into a teaching practice requirement by FENTO of 20 hours for a stage 1 qualifications, and additional 40 hours for stage 2 qualifications and a total of 120 hours for stage 3 qualifications (FENTO, 2001a; FENTO, 2002b).

In addition to the introduction of qualification requirements, there was also the introduction of a second statutory instrument that introduced OFSTED inspection of FE (ITT) courses (2001b). This placed FE teacher training courses on a parallel footing with ITT qualifications for school teachers that already had a well-established system of inspection and grading. Thus within 4 years of taking office New Labour had replaced a voluntary system of ITT with one subject to considerable regulation from national agencies. In line with the 2001 statutory instrument, FENTO developed a process for endorsing all FE teacher-training qualifications. This was inherently problematic given the range and diversity of qualifications and providers. FENTO estimated that there were 46 higher education institutions and over 300 colleges (FENTO 2002) involved in FE teacher training. FENTO identified endorsement as having two functions (FENTO, 2001a), first, to ensure that the content of ITT qualifications covered the FENTO standards and second to check the QA procedures of the awarding institutions. It created a cumbersome process that has survived (SVUK, 2005a; SVUK, 2005b). Endorsement required HEIs and national awarding bodies to match the content of their qualifications and training programmes to the standards to demonstrate proof of coverage and to show how their QA processes would assure the quality of delivery. The latter function was seen as particularly important because of the need to ensure consistency of standards across the diverse range of providers, for example regional consortia of colleges linked to an HEI, and qualifications, for example the several hundred providers offering City & Guilds teaching certificates. Both inspection and endorsement represents potentially key

transition points in how standards are mediated. In Chapter 5, I will examine the roles of OFSTED inspection and FENTO, (now SVUK) endorsement as part of a wider discussion of the role of standards as a regulatory instrument.

Back to the drawing board – 2003 HMI Survey and DfES response

DfES had placed great confidence in the pivotal role of standards and associated qualification requirements in bringing about reforms in the system. From my professional experience during this period, when I was in close contact with DfES teams, I was aware that the first HMI report (OFSTED, 2003b), a national survey of the ITT of FE teachers in England, came as a shock to ministers and officials. It made fundamental criticisms of the standards and the whole structure of FE teacher training. Given that DfES had overall responsibility for the system, its recommendations were largely directed at the Department. The overall summary quoted below was a devastating critique of the FE teacher-training system that DfES had just reformed:

> "The current system of FE teacher training does not provide a satisfactory foundation of professional development for FE teachers at the start of their careers. While the tuition that trainees receive on the taught elements of their courses is generally good, few opportunities are provided for trainees to learn how to teach their specialist subjects and there is a lack of systematic mentoring and support in the workplace. The needs of this diverse group of trainees are not adequately assessed at the start of the courses and training programmes are insufficiently differentiated. As a consequence, many trainees make insufficient progress. While the FENTO standards provide a useful outline of the capabilities required of experienced FE teachers, they do not clearly define the standards required of new teachers. They are, therefore, of limited value in securing a common understanding of the pass/fail borderline on courses of initial training"
>
> (OFSTED, 2003b, p.2)

Rather than starting with the standards, this detailed survey that involved 8 HEIs and 23 linked FE colleges, focussed upon how the taught and work-based elements of ITT courses were integrated to prepare trainees for teaching in FE. Inspectors adopted a longitudinal approach that involved visiting a sample of universities and colleges three times over the academic

year, to observe and interview trainees and to evaluate their progress with reference to the FENTO standards. The report gave most attention to support for the professional development of new teachers in the workplace through mentoring and the development of specialist teaching skills. Standards were analysed from the point of view of what they meant to teacher-educators and trainees and how far they provided realistic goals for attainment.

I shall reflect upon the report from a personal perspective as I was the HMI responsible for managing the survey and producing the report. There were two strong influences on the way the report was conceptualised. The first was to compare the ITT of FE and school teachers. The Qualifying to Teach Standards (QTS) for trainee-teachers in schools define aspects such as support from a subject-mentor and the development of specialist teaching skills as part of statutory requirements for training (TDA, 2007; Teacher Training Agency, 2002). The poor entitlement of FE trainees in comparison to QTS trainees was striking. The second was that having embarked on PhD study I had become very interested in the literature on situated learning[10] that stresses the social dimensions of learning in the workplace. The survey report reflected this perspective in that it conceived ITT as a form of work-based learning, rather than as just a taught course with a placement element. The generally poor support that trainees received, for example from mentors, and their often narrow experience of teaching and assessment became key issues. This perspective seemed to fit well, given that trainees are predominantly in-service and usually undertake their training at their employing college. I will return to this theme in Chapters 3 and 4 when I attempt to unravel the complex pedagogy of the FE workplace (Billett, 2002; Billett, 2004).

Publication of the report was arranged by DfES officials to coincide with an instant policy response. On the day it came out, DfES published a consultation document, *The Future of Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector - An Agenda for Reform* (DfES, 2003c). In this and

[10] I refer in detail to this literature in chapter 3 and then later in the thesis.

subsequent documents (DfES, 2005; DfES, 2006c) it accepted the findings of the 2003 survey in their entirety and recognised that fundamental reform was needed. After a year's consultation, a set of proposals described by DfES as representing a step-change in ITT, *Equipping our teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* (DfES, 2004a), was published. The following reforms, to be implemented as a package from September 2007, were outlined:

- setting new standards for teachers across the learning and skills sector

- creating a new award of QTLS - Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills that would incorporate the new standards and would parallel QTS for schools teachers

- developing a new professional organisation, the Institute for Learning (IfL) to be responsible for the registration of teachers for QTLS and to consider how their professional status would be maintained

- developing Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) as part of the aim of expanding the capacity of individual providers and partnerships to provide better support for trainee teachers in the workplace

- introducing simple and effective planning and monitoring arrangements through the Lifelong Learning UK, the Sector Skills Council (LLUK)

- developing the skills of teacher trainers, within a professional framework set by LLUK

- amending the 2001 Regulations for teachers' qualifications in further education in the light of the new standards and QTLS

- piloting aspects of the reform, in particular approaches to mentoring to help teachers develop teaching skills in their own subject or specialist area in the period leading up to 2007

- introducing new funding in April 2007, with developmental funding in 2005-06 and 2006-07 to support the reform programme.

New sector, new standards

Although only five years had passed, the political context of these reforms was significantly different from the 1999-2001 FENTO reforms. With the abolition of the FEFC in April 2001 and its replacement by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as a result of the Learning and Skills Act (2000), the PCET map had been redrawn. A more collaborative agenda was being stressed by the Government in place of what was viewed as the intense competition of the previous Conservative administrations (Coffield et al., 2005; Spours, Coffield and Gregson, 2006). The separate streams of post-16 funding for adult and community education, work-based learning and school sixth forms were brought together under LSC.

Meanwhile a much more interventionist approach to reform was signalled with the establishment of a new post-16 Standards Unit as part of the '*Success for All*' strategy (DfES, 2002). A former FE principal, Jane Williamson, was appointed as head of this unit, which was given a similar role to the Standards and Effectiveness Unit for Schools of raising standards of teaching and learning in PCET. Its formation signalled that the era of voluntarism had been replaced with intensive intervention. Hodgson and Spours distinguish between 'strong framework' and 'weak framework' approaches to policy making (Hodgson and Spours, 1999; Hodgson and Spours, 2000). The former involve Government in defining policy and intervening to control its implementation. The latter involves a more 'hands-off' approach. The setting-up in 1997 of the Schools Standards and Effectiveness Unit at DfEE (Barber, 2001) and the development of prescriptive literacy and numeracy strategies for primary

schools are all illustrations of a strong framework approach. The approach to post-compulsory education between 1997 and 2001 was relatively cautious. It relied on working with established interest groups. Hodgson and Spours would characterise this as a weak framework approach. The creation of stronger national and local planning machinery in the form of the LSC (2001), and the post-16 Standards Unit involved a shift toward a strong framework approach. As Hogson and Spours themselves acknowledge, however, there are inherent problems in applying a strong framework approach to PCET. The existence of the National Curriculum and a much more unified teaching workforce in the schools sector give the Government far more direct controls over policy implementation. In PCET, the DfES had to work with a myriad of intermediate agencies such as LSC, LLUK and with incorporated colleges. Policy implementation in PCET is far more complex. I explore this issue as part of my research into how the FENTO and LLUK standards were translated into regulations and qualifications in Chapters 5 and 6.

Policy responsibility for taking forward the ITT reforms was vested in the new post-16 Standards Unit, which stressed its aim of developing (DfES, 2003d, p.47) "a modernised, diverse, qualified, professionally competent workforce" as part of Theme 3 of the *Success for All Strategy – 'Developing Teachers and Leaders of the Future'*. The scope of the 2001 requirement that had applied to new FE teachers was extended to cover existing FE teachers with the target that by 2005/06, 90% of full-time and 60% of part-time staff would be qualified teachers. Checking on the extent to which this target (DfES, 2004d) was achieved was allocated to local LSC's through monitoring colleges' three-year development plans. Each College would have to provide local LSC's with information about the proportion of teachers that were qualified against these targets. The new Standards Unit also became responsible for a major programme of related curriculum development under Theme 2 of *Success for All* that is *Putting Teaching and Learning at the Heart of what we do.* Between 2003 and its abolition in April 2006 the Unit published a wide range of exemplar materials (blue boxes) for individual subject and occupational areas to guide teachers on how to improve teaching practice. It

also piloted aspects of the ITT reforms, through publishing reports (ACER, 2007) on how to improve the mentoring and other aspects of practice.

The new standards for QTLS were for a newly defined Lifelong Learning Sector consisting of teachers, tutors and trainers from FE, adult and community learning, libraries, prison education and work-based training. In 2003, DfES announced (DfES, 2003d) that the 75 NTOs created in the late 1990s, would be replaced by 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSC). A new Lifelong Learning SSC would be created to bring together former NTOs representing staff in adult education, HE, work-based learning and FE. The deeply-rooted commitment to employers setting standards for qualifications and training, associated with the former MSC system was retained in yet another organisational manifestation. Analysis of feedback (DfES, 2004c) from the DfES consultation of 2003 had indicated a strong desire for FE teachers to have comparable status to schools teachers and interest in exploring other models of standard-setting, for example through the TTA for schools. These alternatives were rejected by the DfES (2004a).

I have already commented upon the diversity of FE. The creation of a 'Lifelong Learning Sector' introduced yet more diversity. As the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers has argued (UCET, 2004) the idea of a unified post-16 sector[11] is inherently problematic. Included within it are students aged 14 to post-retirement, a diverse range of qualifications from basic skills to masters level, a range of providers from agricultural to FE colleges to tiny community-based organisations, funding from many sources, LSC, HEFCE, LEAs, DfES etc., staff with a range of expertise and a huge range of regulatory agencies. As UCET (2004, paragraph 2.1) states:

> To ask 'what is the scope of post-compulsory education and training?' is to invite long, thoughtful and sometimes tantalising discussion of definition for the answer is not straightforward. Indeed members wondered whether it was ever going to be possible to define the PCET

[11] I have used the terms 'Lifelong Learning Sector' and post-16 sector interchangeably here. I do appreciate they can have quite different meanings.

> sector, so disparate were its parts and so haphazard had been its growth and development.

The embryonic SSC for Lifelong Learning that was launched as LLUK in 2005 was given the formidable, some might say impossible (Hoare and Kingston, 2003), role of pulling together former NTOs with quite different traditions (Hook, 2003). These included the Employment NTO (ENTO) for those involved in work-based training, PAULO, the NTO for those working in adult education and community learning and the former HESDA (Higher Education Staff Development Association). These separate bodies reflected very distinct traditions of education and training. Staff in work-based training had not regarded themselves as teachers. Their primary role was to assess training in the workplace. They had related to the former Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) that had produced standards and associated qualifications for work-based assessors. Tutors in adult and community education, a predominantly part-time group, reflected a more liberal and emancipatory tradition of education (Jones, 2005) than that of the more qualification-focussed and vocational worlds of FE and work-based learning. Prior to the formation of the LSC, adult and community education was funded primarily through Local Education Authorities (LEA) and work-based training through the Training and Enterprise Councils.

From LLUK standards to QTLS

Within this increasingly complex policy landscape (Coffield et al., 2005), the ITT reforms proceeded steadily between 2004 and 2007. Of central interest, from the standpoint of my thesis, was the process of development leading to the publication in December 2006 of a set of *New Overarching Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector* (LLUK, 2006a). The approach DfES took to the reforms was to regard the different elements as a series of sequential projects. An overall ITT strategy group (Holloway, 2006) was established by DfES with key stakeholder groups: the Association of Colleges, UCET, QCA, NATFHE, OFSTED, FENTO and LLUK. As the HMI responsible for FE teacher training, I was a

member of this group from 2003 to 2005. DfES had a very firm idea of how the different elements of the reform should be phased. It insisted that the specification of standards must precede the design of qualifications (Nasta, 2006). QCA also supported the idea of developing standards in advance of qualifications as this was the routine approach adopted for NVQs and other qualifications linked to occupational standards. Both UCET and OFSTED favoured a more iterative approach which would have involved those responsible for the design of qualifications and training programmes working alongside those responsible for setting standards. Although such a process might have taken longer, it was argued that the final standards would be likely to be more acceptable and workable for those responsible for curriculum design and assessment. This approach was not adopted by DfES.

There are many parallels between the development of the FENTO standards between 1997 and 1999 and the LLUK standards between 2004 and 2006. Consultation was complex and the standards went through several drafts. After 8 versions, LLUK published revised standards in December 2006. Given that DfES was committed to implementing the reforms as a complete package (DfES, 2004a) by September 2007, this left little time for new ITT qualifications to be validated by HEIs, endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) and as far as NABs were concerned, approved by QCA. As an SSC, LLUK had a wider remit than FENTO. It was charged with providing guidance on the detail of qualifications. The LLUK standards were supplemented with detailed interim advice on developing qualifications (LLUK, 2007b) that included learning outcomes and assessment criteria based on the standards. In effect this meant that the LLUK standards were overtaken quickly, unlike the FENTO standards before them, with more detailed documents that translated them into yet further statements of what needed to be included and assessed in the ITT curriculum.

In the LLUK 'guidelines', a three-stage qualification framework is created. A new threshold award, 'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)' was created. In *Equipping our Teachers* (DfES, 2004a) this had been envisaged as a 'passport' that all wishing to teach would have to

complete before teaching. The other two qualifications are a new Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) required by a new category of Associate Teachers and a new Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) linked to the award to full QTLS. The issue of how to design ITT qualifications that met the diverse employment patterns of teachers in the sector was an issue just as much in 2007 as with the original statutory instrument (2001a; 2007b). LLUK claimed that it had identified two teaching roles in the sector:

- a full teaching role which represents the full range of responsibilities performed by those who are expected to attain the status of QTLS and
- an 'associate' teacher role which contains fewer teaching responsibilities.

(LLUK 2007a, p.6)

The draft 2007 statutory instrument followed this distinction and defined an associate teacher as:

> "Delivering a defined and prescribed programme and accordingly with significantly fewer responsibilities in design of curricula and materials than a person employed in a full teaching role; on a one to one basis; delivering a programme confined to a particular level or subject or type of learner or delivering short courses."
>
> (The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007, Consultation of 18 May 2007, p.1)

Associate teachers are required to gain a CTLL, whilst those discharging the full teaching role are required to gain a DTLL. I will argue in Chapter 6 that to disaggregate the LLUK standards and to distinguish between associate and full teaching roles in this way is problematic. For now however, I want to complete this complex chronology of the decade of ITT reforms.

By the time the new standards were published, further layers of policy development were influencing implementation. The emphasis shifted to a

much more focussed approach to workforce development in FE (Foster, 2005) to enable teachers to keep abreast of developments in industry and vocational training. This was in line with Foster's wider message of the need for FE to focus its mission and activities on the skills needs of local employers. The emphasis on the skills agenda was reinforced by a Government Report (Leitch, 2006) from the Treasury. Both the Foster and Leitch Reports can be seen as yet further additions to the 'training legacy' associated with the MSC tradition. DfES responded to this emphasis upon skills with yet another consultation document entitled, *Professionalisation of the Learning and Skills Sector* (DfES, 2006c). It announced that there would be a compulsory continuing professional requirement (CPD) for FE teachers involving a mandatory annual record of CPD activities linked to retaining QTLS status.

The introduction of a prescriptive qualification structure, QTLS status and mandatory CPD required further regulation. The function of endorsement initiated by FENTO has continued within a more complex architecture. When LLUK was formed, the potential for a conflict of interest in having one body responsible for both standards-setting and checking compliance was envisaged by DfES and LLUK. To cope with this, a subsidiary organization linked to LLUK, Standards Verification UK (SVUK) with separate national officers was created to handle the endorsement and approvals of ITT qualifications. A separate professional body for teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector, the Institute for Learning (IfL), to deal with issues of registration for QTLS, professional development and professional conduct had also been envisaged by the (DfES, 2004a) reforms. In effect this was seen as a national body with parallel functions to those of the General Teaching Council (GTC) for school teachers. An outline of the future role of the IfL is contained in the DfES Consultation paper on professionalisation. As the extract below illustrates a link is made with the Foster and Leitch emphasis on skills.

> "Industrial and subject updating is critical to ensuring that both teachers and learners are equipped with the skills required by industry. This is

> particularly important in the current climate, where responsiveness to employers is a priority. There will be a professional registration body for the sector, which will ensure that the CPD requirement is being met. The 'Institute for Learning' are performing this role and they have piloted a CPD process."
>
> (DfES, 2006c, p.5)

When IfL was formed in 2004, it attracted little enthusiasm from FE and other teachers judging by the 450 members it attracted during in its first year of operation (Merrick, 2004). However, under the QTLS and CPD regulations (2007b) there is now a compulsory requirement to register with IfL and the Government is meeting the costs of professional registration, whilst the new system is being established (IfL, 2007).

Additional standards Skills for Life (SfL) teachers

My attempt to summarise a decade of reforms to ITT and analyse some of the deeper policy undercurrents would be incomplete without a brief reference to the parallel reforms for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Whilst my thesis focuses on the generic standards, there are several connections with the SfL agenda, not least because a key aspect of the generic requirements became developing all teachers capabilities and awareness of language, literacy and numeracy skills, referred to by LLUK as the 'minimum core'. I will deal with this aspect as part of my wider discussion of the different strands in the standards in Chapter 5. For now I wish to make brief reference to the subject standards and qualification requirements which provide a contrasting pedagogical model because of their emphasis on subject-specific teaching skills.

The attempt to improve the training of SfL teachers also illustrates the interplay of different policy agendas. Alongside the general ITT reforms, DfEE was moving swiftly to address the UK's poor record in improving adult basic skills raised by several influential reports, for example (Moser, 1999). In 2001, *Skills for Life - the National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy* was published (DfEE, 2001). One aspect of this was improving the

training of teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Additional standards, based on specialist subject knowledge, for teachers in these areas, were therefore developed. As part of the strategy, these teachers were required to gain qualifications which met the 2001 statutory requirement plus subject-specialist standards (DfES and FENTO, 2002a; DfES and FENTO, 2002b). The attempt to relate subject standards based upon established academic disciplines to occupational standards for FE teachers has itself been the subject of much research by the National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), for example (NRDC, 2003). Indeed building subject pedagogy into generic teacher training for SfL provides an interesting case study of the issues that will arise as the general EOT reforms which place greater emphasis upon subject-specific teaching skills are implemented (OFSTED, 2003b). These subject specifications have now been superseded by detailed guidance from LLUK on how to integrate specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills into the new LLUK framework of PTLLS, CTTLS and DTTLS qualifications (LLUK, 2007a).

2.3 Wider policy themes

The purpose of the detailed chronology that I have provided is to describe the complex forces at play in the origins of these standards. In this final section of this chapter, I will draw upon the wider policy literature to show how the 'short history' of reform in this area reflects more deep-seated features of government intervention in PCET. These in turn are reflected in the nature of the standards. I will then return to this discussion again in Chapters 5 and 6 when I examine the nature of standards as a specific policy lever and regulatory instrument.

I have selected six features of policy intervention that illustrate the above.

An intensely complex, unpredictable and busy policy environment

Many authorities have commented upon the intensely complex and busy policy environment that characterises policy intervention in PCET (Ainley,

2001; Ainley, 2004; Ball, 1990; Coffield, 2006; Hodgson and Spours, 2006; Keep, 2006; Lucas, 2003; Perry, 1999; Spours, Coffield and Gregson, 2006). The busyness is illustrated by successive layers of innovation being rapidly superimposed on preceding interventions. Keep describes the English vocational education and training system as:

> "an elaborate and entertaining train set (p.47) ... that has witnessed central government (and its agencies) drawn into undertaking more and more E&T activity, being forced to intervene further in order to shore up earlier interventions, targets and policy goals."
>
> (Keep, 2007, p.47 and p.52)

The speed and intensity of successive waves of ITT reforms and the confluence of different and often conflicting policy agendas, for example: Skills for Life, 14-19 reform, developing NTOs and SSCs all illustrate this busyness. The FENTO standards and associated regulatory framework had barely been introduced, before they were superseded by the 2004-2007 reforms and a new set of standards. One of the dangers of this turbulence is that those in receipt of policy become overwhelmed with adjusting to change and cynical about the benefits to learners.

Centralized and top-down intervention combined with a strong reliance on intermediary agencies

In their case study of a post-incorporation college Ainley and Bailey (1997) use the phrase the 'contracted-out state' to capture the array of intermediary agencies that have vastly complicated the PCET landscape. In a complex and ever-changing policy context Coffield et al (2005, p.634) describe "how the reconstructed welfare state has become more centralized and reliant on ...'arms length' agencies to oversee the spending of public money" and how innovation is interpreted as continuous change by supposedly independent institutions "hemmed in by prescriptive lists of changes laid down by government."

Policy intervention in post-compulsory teacher training very much exemplifies these features, especially during the second Blair administration of 2001-2005. A much more interventionist stance represented by the formation of LSC and the post-16 standards unit and LLUK was adopted. The Standards Unit attempted to micro-manage the ITT reform process in a much more directive way than had been the case with FENTO. A bewildering range of arms-length agencies have come and gone during the decade of ITT reforms. FESDF became FENTO which in turn underwent metamorphosis into LLUK and SVUK. FEFC was abolished and replaced by LSC and most recently the Brown Government has announced that LSC's role in funding 14-19 education will be taken over by LEAs. Inspection of FE teacher training has been introduced, but here too there has been volatility with OFSTED absorbing the Adult Learning Inspectorate in 2006-7. One of the consequences of the creation of so many arms-length agencies is that identifying the 'policy text' becomes remarkably difficult (Hodgson and Spours, 2006). Until the 1970s, policy was likely to appear in official Government and Parliamentary publications such as White and Green papers. In the current environment, the sources of policy text are much more diverse. As well as the more conventional sources, key aspects of reform also appear in the publications of intermediary agencies such as LLUK and QCA. In Chapter 5, I will demonstrate how the different sources and strands represented in the standards reflect this policy buffeting as LLUK and other intermediary bodies adjusted to different nuances in this policy environment.

Continuation of neo-liberal market-based era of policy intervention

Underlying the complexity and busyness of policy making described above are strong elements of continuity. I agree with Hodgson and Spours who argue that there has been a single political era since the mid-1980s. The Blair administrations carried on with many of the features of neo-liberalism initiated by Thatcher.

> "We argue that the period from the mid-1980s to the present, despite changes in political parties, broadly constitutes a single political era

> dominated by divisive and selective approaches to qualifications development, marketised organizational arrangements and voluntarist approaches to work-based training and the youth labour market."
>
> (Hodgson & Spours, 2006, p. 686)

They stress the dominance of the ideology of marketization throughout the period, illustrated for example by the introduction of incorporation and regulatory systems based upon colleges competing for funding. Whilst the FEFC was abolished, its successor organization, the LSC did not fundamentally change the funding system that it inherited. It continued to highlight the independence of colleges as self-managing organizations, even if their autonomy was constrained with a barrage of targets and performance indicators. Within the overall paradigm of continuity, however, there were important differences in values and emphasis. Labour Governments placed much greater importance on collective values and collaboration in their distinctive 'third way' politics (Giddens, 1998). This contrasted with the more free-market and monetarist approaches adopted by previous Conservative administrations. The development of standards for post-compulsory teachers and associated targets that independent colleges were required to meet as part of the *Success for all* strategy is an example of the application of this overall market paradigm to ITT reforms, as is the reliance on supposedly autonomous national awarding bodies and HEIs to adjust their qualifications in response to a combination of centrally-driven policies and market pressures.

Hodgson and Spour's concept of the political era is useful because it allows for distinctions to be made between subtle changes in the overall stance of government intervention within a wider framework of continuity. During the first Labour administration, policy on ITT seems to have reflected the 'weak framework approach' (Hodgson and Spours, 1999) described earlier in the chapter i.e. a reliance on voluntary reforms with indirect intervention by Government. This approach was superseded by much more intense intervention in the second Blair Government between 2001 and 2005 as Hyland (2002, p.257) argues:

> "New Labour education policy is more centralist than that of the previous Conservative administration and, moreover needs to be so to develop the strong frameworks which as ...Hodgson and Spours (1999) argue, are essential to the development of lifelong learning policies based on democracy and social justice."

In its third period of office, Labour has shifted its policy stance yet again and is emphasizing the importance of the Government adopting a more hands-off strategy that is based on 'self-improving' providers implementing improvements to the delivery of public services. Within the ITT arena, this has been signalled by the abolition in 2006 of the short-lived post-16 Standards Unit and the creation of yet another intermediary body, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) that is emphasizing a much lighter-touch regime. As part of my research, I interviewed civil servants during each of these 3 phases and their responses, which I report in chapters 5 and 6 illustrate these changes in approach.

Managerialism – high investment and high challenge

An integral part of marketisation has been the emphasis on managerial approaches, both in the ways that the state implements policy and in the manner that educational providers run their internal affairs (Randle and Brady, 1997; Shain and Gleeson, 1999). Lomas (2003) identifies five key features of the managerial paradigm. First, the idea that managerialism is applicable to all large organizations, whether they are private corporations or public services. In this model, students are seen as consumers that require the same standardization, predictability and reliability when receiving education as when purchasing goods and services from private companies. Teaching, learning and students' achievements are seen as the products of education, outputs of well-managed organizations. Second, that mass further and higher education requires the application of strong management disciplines; its cost to the taxpayer necessitates best commercial practice. The development of a quasi-market in educational services, for example funding systems that pay by results, is seen as the best guarantee for the consumer. Third, that private

sector disciplines such as performance management and total quality management should be applied to achieve the three goals of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Fourth, that government should set a strategic framework for the educational market by regulating provision through the definition of national standards, inspection and funding arrangements. Finally, professions within the system can act as a barrier to change, through adhering to old customs and restrictive practices in poorly-managed organizations.

The approach of the post-16 Standards Unit exemplifies many of the features of applying managerialism to the implementation of the ITT reforms, for example the implementation plan (DfES, 2005) for managing the 2004-2007 reforms following the publication of *Equipping our Teachers* (DfES, 2004a) and the associated Delivery Plan (DfES, 2003d) in *Success for All*. Indeed the language: delivery plans, targets, performance indicators, used to encapsulate government policies in this area is redolent with the jargon of private sector management (Leah, Ottewill and McKenzie, 2005). Professor Michael Barber, the former head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, pioneered many of these techniques at a central policy level (Barber, 2001). He argued that 'high challenge and high support' from Government are critical to the systematic transformation of the educational service. From his perspective, high challenge is provided by the state setting high standards and challenging targets. High support is provided by identifying 'best practice' through inspection and the definition of national strategies, for example the national literacy and national numeracy strategies in primary schools and *Success for All* in PCET. Barber introduces the concept of earned autonomy, the idea that the 'best' providers that demonstrate achievement of the high standards set by the state are rewarded with greater freedom to manage their own affairs. The very idea that it is possible to define 'best practice', in a contested field like education, whilst beguiling for policy makers is itself part of this policy rhetoric. Managerialism has arguably been the most pervasive influence on teaching and learning in FE since incorporation in 1993 and in the next chapter, I will analyse its influence on pedagogy.

A linear model - from policy development to pedagogical implementation

In the model described above, what happens in schools and colleges, is defined as the end point in the reform process. First, the state, defines the overall strategy, then through its intermediary bodies, for example LLUK and QCA, the detail of the reforms are fleshed out and finally they are implemented in the 'real-life' context of colleges. Educational practice lies at the end point of the conveyor belt of policy implementation. Underlying the policy model applied to the FENTO and LLUK standards is the linear notion that standards must be specified first, then regulations and qualifications must be developed that incorporate the standards, and only at the final stage are a curriculum and assessment model to be developed that form the basis of what trainees actually experience (Nasta, 2007). This model is based on very different assumptions from those of curriculum designers in universities and colleges, where standards are one element in a complex process of constructing a curriculum. I will argue in the next chapter this policy model of the curriculum and pedagogy is too simplistic. This narrow perspective on learning and pedagogy is summarised well by Griffiths & Guille (2004, p.73) when they state:

> "Knowledge and skill should not simply be conceived as by many policy makers as commodities to be built into curricula, acquired, converted into people's private property and used mechanically to inform conduct."

Attempts by government to micro-manage what goes on in schools and colleges, using a prescribed curriculum based upon national standards, are reflective of this crude view of pedagogy as the transmission of officially-sanctioned knowledge. The civil servants, that I interviewed, as part of my own research (Chapter 5), often reflected this mindset. For them the issue of translating standards from policy to pedagogy was unproblematic.

Isolation of policy development for FE and PCET from schools and HE

Increasing state intervention to regulate ITT and FE has been overlain on a tradition of separatism that is evident at several levels - in policy making within government departments, in funding and inspection, in national regulatory agencies linked to teachers and employers and in different qualifications tracks for schools, FE and HE teachers. This separation is remarkable, given obvious intersections between the work of colleges, schools and universities. There are more students aged 16 to 19 taking qualifications, including GCSE and GCE A and AS levels in colleges, some half a million of them, than there are at schools and over 10% of students taking HE qualifications do so in FE (HMSO, 1998). Notions of lifelong learning that successive governments have stressed (DfEE, 1998b) are premised on allowing the learner to progress seamlessly through different stages of education.

Separate policy traditions were reflected at departmental level at the time the FENTO and LLUK standards were being developed. In their historical study of the formation of the former DfEE in 1995, Aldrich et al (2000) present a picture of two separate traditions. A training culture associated with the former Department of Employment and MSC which they characterise as "hands-on frontline operator" (p.24) and the "the hands-off, policy-based administrator style" (p.24) of the educational wing of the Department. The former MSC promoted an industrial model of training associated with employer-lead bodies and competency-based qualifications. It was 'hands-on' in that it believed in an interventionist approach based upon linking funding for provision to targets linked to defined outcomes. The creation of the post-16 Standards Unit and the micro-management by the Department of the ITT reforms after 2004 are illustrative of this tradition. The more cerebral 'hands-off' policy style was rooted in the tradition of the former Department of Education and Science, which before the advent of the National Curriculum and the 1988 Education Reform Act had been a small department reliant upon LEAs for implementing national policies. In their study of the evolution of vocational qualifications in the 1990s (Raggatt and Williams, 1999) also comment on the divergent objectives and cultures of the training and educational wings of the DfEE.

My own professional experience between 1997 and 1999, as a full-time post-16 adviser at the London DfEE was that these separate educational and training traditions were very much alive and influenced policy on FETT. This can be illustrated by the fact that two different policy divisions[12] from the Department, one responsible for the emergent policy on NTOs and located at Moorfoot (Sheffield), the other responsible for quality and standards in FE and London-based, were represented in the meetings of the Further Education Staff Development Forum (FESDF). Between 1997 and 1998, I was an observer representing the Department on FESDF. The London-based policy teams that I advised were concerned with linking the emerging standards to wider educational and professional traditions. In contrast, the Moorfoot group of civil servants who had originally been based in the Employment Department had the task of getting NTOs up and running. They were constrained by having to fit the emergent FENTO into the competency model being applied to other occupational groups. I will explore the micro-politics of this divide further in Chapter Six as it helps to explain the multi-faceted nature of the FENTO standards. Another policy division altogether and one not represented at all was the Teacher Supply and Training Division. The word 'teacher' as far as this division was concerned referred solely to those working in schools. Ironically, in parallel with the proposals for reforming FE teaching qualifications, DfES had published its 1998 Green Paper (DfEE, 1998d) on modernising the teaching profession. It is significant that the policy developments for school and FE teachers were treated in complete isolation from one another.

The separate traditions of policy making are mirrored down the governmental chain in separate funding and inspection arrangements for schools, HE and FE. Under both FEFC and LSC, colleges have faced a tight funding regime based on calculating the volume of learning (FEFC, 1992; LSC, 2004b) that echoes many aspects of the MSC model of linking funding to outputs. Other

[12] The Standards Quality and Access Division from Sanctuary Buildings in London and the National Training Organisations Division in Moorfoot

aspects of regulation, in particular quality assurance and external inspection have also reflected a tradition of separation. Different inspectorates for schools and colleges were created in the early 1990s, although these have since been brought together. The FEFC Inspectorate for colleges following the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 and OFSTED that became responsible for the inspection of schools from April 1993. Meanwhile, the HE sector developed distinct arrangements first through the Higher Education Quality Agency and later through its successor body, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Each of these external QA agencies developed its own quality frameworks based upon the distinct cultural traditions of their sector. The area where separation is most evident is in the separate qualification tracks and separate standards for schools, FE and HE teachers. I will explore these pedagogical aspects in the next chapter.

2.4 Concluding comments

In an analysis of government policy towards youth training Raffe (1990) distinguishes between the intrinsic and institutional logic of policy reform. Intrinsic logic refers to the political rationale for reform, what policy makers hope to achieve based upon what appears to them as a rational analysis of the position. The institutional logic refers to the outcome of reform when the social, political and institutional contexts where policy is played out are taken into account. It is as much concerned with the unintended as the intended consequences of reform. In a comment on the current predilection of governments for defining standards, as the basis for qualifications to achieve changes in practice, Young (2002, p.47) develops this distinction further when he states that:

> "The experience of those countries that have developed (or are developing) outcomes-based approaches suggests that while they tend to share a common notion of their intrinsic logic – what they hope to achieve – they have given very little attention to … their institutional logic."

Young goes onto distinguish between institutional factors operating at a macro and at a micro level. The discussion of the origins of the standards in this chapter has been largely about institutional factors at the macro policy level. Micro-factors involve unravelling how policy is interpreted and recreated in the pedagogical domain – the focus is on the processes of teaching and learning in the distinctive organizational context of FE. This thesis could be seen as an exploration of the institutional logic of the ITT reforms. I will continue with this exploration by analysing the complex pedagogy of ITT in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 NATURE, CURRICULA AND PEDAGOGICAL TRADITIONS

3.1 Introduction

"The processes of translating national policy into local practice appear complex, multi-layered, uneven, dynamic, ambiguous, conflictual and often contradictory". *(Edward and Coffield, 2007, p.122)*

I suggested in the last chapter that attempts by governments to micro-manage teaching in colleges using standards and targets, reflect a crude view of pedagogy as the transmission of officially-sanctioned knowledge. The civil servants, that I interviewed (Chapters 5 and 6), often reflected this mindset. For them the issue of translating standards was usually seen as a straightforward issue of policy implementation. They were beguiled by the intrinsic logic of reform and generally had given little thought to the institutional factors (Raffe, 1990) that shape the way policy is translated. They saw their task as ensuring national standards were developed which would then be converted into qualifications and teacher-education programmes. It was hard for them to appreciate that as Coffield (2007) suggests that the pedagogical context of an FE College is complex, multi-layered and often contradictory. Edwards (2001), a writer in the Vygotskian tradition, characterises the government mindset as a crude empiricism that sees the transmission of knowledge to learners as unproblematic. For her, pedagogy is about interpretative and responsive teaching where "learning becomes a matter of reading the landscape in increasingly informed ways and knowing how best to use the resources available." (ibid, p.171) Knowledge cannot simply be transmitted. It is interpreted and recreated by teachers and learners who are located in distinct communities and work contexts and have very different concerns from policy makers.

My aim in this chapter is to start to unravel key features of the multi-faceted pedagogy of FE teacher education. This is a complex task, first, because until recently this area has been under-researched in comparison with schools and higher education (Hillier and Jameson, 2003; Hughes, Taylor and Tight, 1996; Noel, 2006; Spenceley, 2007). Second, although the research literature is

growing it includes studies from very different theoretical starting points. These include:

- Historical studies of ITT, for example (Aldrich and Crook, 2003; Aldrich, Crook and Watson, 2000; Green, 1990; Lucas, 1996; Lucas, 2002; Lucas, 2003) that chart how the curriculum of ITT has changed over time. I drew upon these sources in Chapter 2 when analysing the policy context.

- Analyses of the subject content to the ITT curriculum, some of which draw upon Bernstein's conceptualisation of vertical and horizontal discourses (Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000; Hobley, 2008; Loo, 2006; Lucas et al., 2004; Young, 2004a; Young, 2004b) and others, the very different model of the reflective practitioner (Harkin, 2005, Schon, 1983).

- Research on qualifications and assessment, for example (Hodgson and Spours, 1999; Hodgson and Spours, 2000; Hodgson and Spours, 2006; Knighton, 2004; Parsons and Berry-Lound, 2004; Raffe et al., 1997; Raggatt and Williams, 1999; Young, 2002) that are helpful for comparing the separate standards and qualification tracks for schools, FE and HE teachers.

- Studies of managerialism and professionalism in the post-incorporation period (Eraut, 1994; Hodkinson, 1998; Leathwood, 2001; Lomas, 2003; Randle and Brady, 1997; Robson, 1998a; Robson, 1998b; Robson, 2006; Shain and Gleeson, 1999) that analyze how teaching and professional development are being shaped in the quasi-market world of FE.

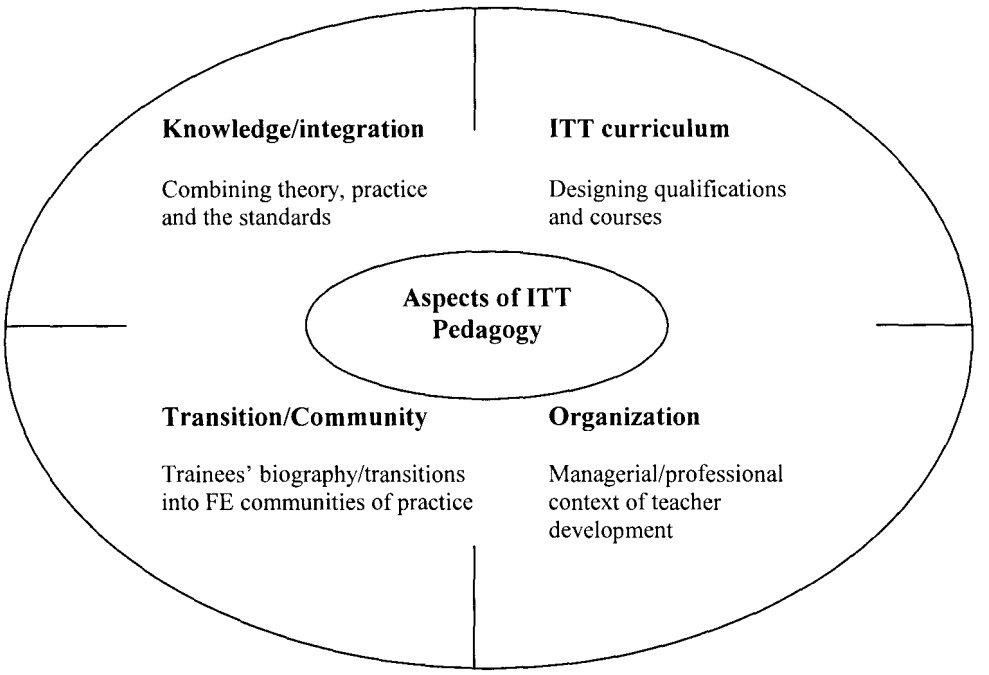
- Studies of FE teachers' biographies and learning careers (Delaney, 2007; Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003; Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005; Hodkinson, 1998; Hodkinson and Bloomer, 2002; Hodkinson et

al., 2004; Hodkinson and James, 2003; Noel, 2006; Spenceley, 2007) that demonstrate the importance of taking into account individual agency in the journeys that adult learners make in becoming FE teachers.

- Finally, there are studies based upon post-Vygotskian models of learning, where the workplace itself is viewed as a pedagogical site. (Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002; Avis, Kendal and Parsons, 2003; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Billett, 2002; Billett, 2004; Boreham and Morgan, 2004; Daniels, 2001; Engeström, 1999a; Engeström, 2001; Engeström, 2004a; Fuller, 2005; Fuller and Unwin, 2004; Griffiths and Guile, 2004; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Unwin et al., 2005; Wenger, 1998). These are particularly pertinent given that most trainee-teachers learn to teach in the college in which they are employed and my own thesis is grounded very much in this literature.

I draw on this diverse literature, in this chapter, using the classification in Figure 3 that divides the pedagogical context into four inter-related aspects. Those in the upper half, knowledge and curriculum are most directly reflected in the taught aspects of ITT. The focus is upon what knowledge is included in ITT qualifications and how it is integrated with practice. Those in the lower half, transition, community and organization draw upon wider conceptions of learning as participation in communities and organizations and also consider biographical factors in learning to teach. The figure illustrates that learning to teach involves trainees and teacher educators in integrating different aspects of knowledge and practice within the distinctive workplace of FE.

Figure 3: Pedagogical context of ITT (FE)



3.2 Standards and teachers' knowledge

The FENTO and LLUK standards are attempts to capture the distinctive knowledge of teachers in FE and PCET and express them in codified form. There is not common agreement about whether it is possible to capture teachers' knowledge in this manner. Underlying the debate are conflicting epistemological positions about the nature of pedagogy. At one extreme, there is a positivist paradigm where knowledge is seen as universal and applicable across contexts. At the other end of the continuum are a range of perspectives that see knowledge as embodied in practice, the making of meaning in specific contexts. This debate has been traced back (Eisner, 2002) to Greek conceptions of differences between episteme - knowledge that is applicable across contexts and phronesis, practical knowledge gained from working in a particular situation based upon practical reasoning borne of experience.

> "Practical reasoning is deliberative, it takes into account local circumstances, it weighs tradeoffs, it is riddled with uncertainties, it

> depends upon judgements, profits from wisdom, addresses particulars, it deals with contingencies, is iterative and shifts aim in process when necessary."
>
> (Eisner, 2002, p.375)

In a similar vein, other commentators (Chen, 2006; Yoo, 1999) draw upon Greek conceptions of the relationship between knowledge and practice and argue that attempting to apply the positivist paradigm to teachers is inappropriate. Chen argues that:

> "Teachers' daily action is generative rather than pre-determined and has the active construction of the Latin word 'praxis', rather than a static rational reality in the sense of positivism."
>
> (Chen 2006, p3)

Teachers are less concerned with whether a particular theory or a set of standards corresponds to reality than whether the body of knowledge is useful to them. They are more concerned with the utility of knowledge – what they can do with it in the specific contexts in which they work than whether it provides an accurate mirror or universal explanation. Yoo stresses the social dimension of the practice of teachers which gains its legitimacy in a wider professional community:

> "Praxis is conduct in a public space with others in which a person acts in such a way as to realize excellence that he has come to appreciate in his community as constitutive of a worthwhile way of life."
>
> (Yoo, 1999, p.76)

One of the fundamental problems with capturing teachers' knowledge and activities in the form of standards is that many aspects of their day-to-day roles are carried out through working collaboratively with other staff and students to achieve shared goals. Evaluating individual capabilities by treating standards as the basis for assessing performance may be inherently problematic. Learning to teach may be better seen using the metaphor of *the*

connoisseur (Arnal and Burwood, 2003) as knowledge that can only be acquired through repeated engagement in particular practices such as assessing students. To become a connoisseur involves a long period of exposure to the practices of a particular community.

This point is picked up by leading authorities on situated learning who stress that much knowledge is gained through participation in social settings (Engeström, 1999a; Evans and Rainbird, 2002; Fuller et al., 2005; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003; Lave and Wenger, 1991). Two models of learning and knowledge are contrasted (Evans and Rainbird, 2002; Hager, 2004). First, there is the situated learning model which sees knowledge as developed through participation in a community; as embodied in particular physical circumstances; as located in a particular social context and as dynamic, in the sense that participants in a community adapt knowledge through social interaction to meet the particular challenges of their environment. Second, there is the established model that sees learning as acquisition of knowledge by individuals through processes that are rational, detached, abstract and generalised. In the latter the social and participatory aspects i.e. exploring the social contexts in which individuals work and learn are not the prime focus of attention. Teachers' learning and knowledge cuts across both these models in that much of their practice is acquired from working with others in the sense Eisner (2002) describes, but at the same time many will have gained subject and occupational knowledge through the 'established model'.

Eraut (1994, p15) takes this analysis further in arguing that:

> "Important aspects of professional competence and expertise cannot be represented in propositional form and embedded in a publicly accessible knowledge base."

He suggests that teachers are "not so much in a 'knowing' environment as in a 'doing' environment" (ibid, p.31,) and that their unique use of knowledge involves "digesting far more information than could possibly be described in any brief propositional form." (ibid, p.13) This view of knowledge "stands in

marked contrast to the preferred public image of a reliable, quasi-scientific knowledge base." (ibid, p17) He goes onto argue that:

> "Professional knowledge cannot be characterised in a manner that is independent of how it is learned and how it is used. It is in looking at the context of its acquisition and its use that its essential nature is revealed." (ibid, p19)
>
> And
>
> "Using an idea in one context does not enable it to be used in another context without considerable further learning taking place." (ibid, p33)

In later publications (Eraut, 2005b; Eraut, 2005c), a useful distinction is made between codified, cultural and personal knowledge. Codified knowledge is publicly available, for example in the form of books, journal articles and standards. It is subject to public debate and consultation and is a powerful form of knowledge insofar as it is often incorporated into qualifications. Cultural knowledge refers to that learnt in a particular situation, for example the type of knowledge that emerges and develops in Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Personal knowledge refers to the way in which individuals draw upon their own experience, cultural and codified knowledge for pragmatic purposes. The three types of knowledge should not be seen as separate; they are part of the overall resource that professionals draw upon in learning and making decisions. A key issue for Eraut is how codified knowledge is adapted as it moves between contexts:

> "The process of learning to use codified knowledge acquired in one context, often formal education and training, in a very different context of public use, is very challenging because it requires both considerable understanding of situations in the new context and the selection and transformation of codified knowledge to make it suit each particular situation: this process is also likely to involve other forms of knowledge with which it has to be integrated."
>
> (Eraut, 2005, p.2).

This neatly captures the central issue for any set of standards entering the pedagogical spheres inhabited by teachers. How will they as a form of publicly

codified knowledge be interpreted and re-interpreted as they are used as part of the cultural and personal resources of organisations and individuals. Essentially, this is the central theme of my research.

Young refines this argument further by drawing upon Bernstein's distinction between horizontal and vertical discourses (Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000), He questions whether knowledge derived from the attempt to codify workplace performance, which he calls the standards-based approach, can form the basis of transferable knowledge (Young, 2004a). Horizontal discourses reflect the immediacy of a particular situation – they are local, segmented and context-bound. Vertical discourses are a form of less-situated knowledge – more generally applicable, explicit and coherent, such as the types of knowledge articulated in a subject discipline. The attempt to codify occupational standards for Young is:

> "A form of horizontal discourse; it embodies no explicit principles for transferring meanings across segments."
>
> (Young, 2004a, p.196)

I have so far argued that teachers' knowledge does not fit neatly within the positivist paradigm and I have touched on alternative perspectives that emphasize how learning and knowledge are developed through participation. I have considered Eraut's approach that sees professional knowledge as integrating propositional, situated and personal knowledge and referred to Young's argument that there are inherent problems of re-contextualisation when codification is solely based upon horizontal knowledge derived from representations of work-based activities. I will return to these issues in Chapter 5. I now will shift my emphasis to the question of what areas of knowledge, including subject knowledge have featured in ITT.

3.3 Teachers' knowledge and the ITT Curriculum

All ITT courses face some common questions of curriculum design:

- What knowledge, including theory, to include in the course?
- What is the appropriate balance between the taught and practice elements?
- How should these elements be sequenced? There are three possibilities: theory first, practice first or theory and practice running concurrently.

In a fairly straightforward classification (Borko and Putnam, 1995), teachers' knowledge is broken down into 3 categories:

- general pedagogical knowledge – skills/beliefs/theories about teaching and learning that transcend subject-domains – preparing a lesson, managing student behaviour etc.
- subject-matter knowledge – knowledge gained from studying/applying their own discipline usually prior to teaching
- pedagogical-content knowledge – focussing on how a subject area, its underlying epistemology and the topics and issues within it can be organised and represented for teaching.

In terms of the earlier discussion, the first of these might be seen as knowledge that is largely situated – praxis that is best learnt through immersion in practice. The second, subject knowledge fits Bernstein's concept of a vertical discourse – knowledge that is abstract and contains inherent rules for re-contextualisation. Borko and Putnam (ibid) argue that their last category is the most important. It involves teachers integrating knowledge of their specialist area with general pedagogical questions and in so doing exploring epistemological issues, such as disentangling the types of knowledge in their subject and considering the difficulties that these present for learners. They argue that integrating specialist knowledge and general pedagogy leads to teachers deepening their own subject knowledge and their

ability to teach it. What Borko and Putnam describe could be seen as the process of re-contextualizing subject knowledge for the purpose of teaching.

A more elaborate classification of teachers' knowledge is provided by (Shulman, 1987):

- content knowledge
- general pedagogical knowledge
- curriculum knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds.

Schulman divides general pedagogical knowledge into a longer list of categories than Burko and Putnam. Like them, he places a strong emphasis upon pedagogical-content knowledge i.e. teachers being able to integrate their specialist knowledge with their knowledge of context so that it becomes more accessible and comprehensible to learners. Like Eraut, he acknowledges the many tacit aspects of teachers' knowledge and that knowledge is developed within a community of experienced practitioners.

An isolated pedagogical tradition - Separate standards and qualification tracks

I will now compare the ITT of schools, colleges and HE teachers drawing upon the above categories, whilst also introducing the idea of different ITT qualification tracks. One of the most distinctive features of ITT (FE) is its pedagogical isolation. The separate traditions of policy making, funding and inspection that I described in Chapter 2 are matched by separate qualification tracks for schools, FE and HE teachers. With the advent of the National Curriculum in 1988, teaching, assessment and qualifications for schools became heavily prescribed by the Secretary of State with a division between

key stages and a tight prescription of core subjects for pupils. At the opposite end of the spectrum, HEIs as self-governing awarding institutions have considerable autonomy over the design and content of qualifications. In contrast vocational and employment-based qualifications offered by colleges reflect a market tradition. The historical context is important. Green comments on how governments in England after the advent of compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth century were reluctant to centrally control the vocational training system that had been based upon a system of craft guilds and apprenticeships (Green, 1990). A market-based system had evolved with a plethora of professional and national awarding bodies that developed qualifications to meet the very specific needs of occupational groups (Ecclestone, 1996; Ecclestone, 1997; Nasta, 1994). Despite successive attempts to rationalize qualifications, for example through the formation of BTEC, NCVQ and QCA, there are still several hundred vocational and professional qualifications awarded by scores of different bodies (Gray, Griffin and Nasta, 2005). The development of FENTO, LLUK and their associated standards and the whole tradition of initial training for FE teachers has to be seen against this backcloth.

In an attempt to classify how post-compulsory education has evolved in different industrial countries, Raffe et al distinguish between tracked, linked and unified systems (Raffe et al., 1997). Their analysis is pitched at a macro-level in that the different elements that make up an educational system, such as curricula and government regulation, are compared and contrasted. Tracked systems are characterised by separate routes with distinctive standards, regulations, curricula, qualifications, institutions and other features. In contrast, unified systems are characterised by commonality, so that students can combine different modes of learning. They are able to integrate the study of general and vocational qualifications. In between these extremes are linked systems, where there is movement between tracks because of horizontal structures. This classification is applied to assess movements towards the integration of curricula and qualifications in advanced industrial societies. For example it provides a useful model for analysing attempts to build bridges between general and vocational qualification such as the

introduction of the changes to post-16 qualifications associated with 'Curriculum 2000' (Dearing, 1996), and most recently the specialized vocational diplomas (Tomlinson, 2004). The authors argue that the English system of qualifications is a tracked system with separate routes for academic and vocational study. In the table and subsequent discussion that follows, I have applied some of the criteria used by Raffe et al. to highlight how FE teacher training has evolved independently from the ITT systems for school and HE teachers. The table also draws upon my former work as an HMI in coordinating the 2003 OFSTED survey which made a comparison of the ITT for secondary school and FE teachers (OFSTED, 2003, p.40-41). I have also made use of Bailey and Robson's (2002) useful comparison of the professional training of these 3 groups of teachers.

FEATURES	ITT (PCET) COMPARED TO ITT FOR SCHOOLS AND HE
GOVERNMENT AND REGULATION	
Standards and regulatory bodies	Separate standards (FENTO and LLUK) as opposed to TDA (schools) and the 'Academy' (HE) and separate requirements of providers. ITT qualifications are a statutory requirement for schools and FE teachers, but voluntary for HE teachers. Schools ITT has been inspected by OFSTED since 1993 and ITT (FE) since 2001. However, the inspection frameworks are different. School teachers are required to be members of the General Teaching Council. FE has a separate national organisation, the Institute for Learning.
Funding	Different funding systems, with mixed economy for PCET based primarily on HEFCE and LSC and simpler funding for schools, based primarily on TDA and HE based on HEFCE.
Requirements for providers	Requirements for PCET defined in separate statutory legislation (2001 and 2007 statutory instruments) defining role of FENTO and LLUK and endorsement requirements. Much tighter requirements for training of schools teachers defined by TDA and much looser requirements for HE based upon relationship with Academy.
DELIVERY	
Providers	ITT (PCET) based upon partnerships between HEIs, FE and other providers. Much provision delivered locally by teacher-educators in colleges for in-service trainees. Common for ITT (PCET) trainees to study for qualifications in colleges where they are employed. Schools ITT is predominantly pre-service and delivered in partnership between HEIs
Teacher-educators	
Teacher-trainees	

	and schools. However, HEIs predominantly responsible for 'taught elements' and schools responsible for placement of pre-service trainees. ITT for HE teachers predominantly delivered 'in-house' by employing HEI, but generally courses are shorter and less-intense.
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND CURRICULA TRADITIONS	
Purpose and ethos	Historical evolution of 3 systems quite distinct with introduction of statutory requirements linked to QTS and standards for schools teachers pre-dating those for FE and HE teachers.
Accreditation/Linkages	QTS for schools teachers normally associated with PGCE or degrees awarded by HEIs. LLUK-endorsed qualifications awarded by both HEIs and by national awarding bodies. Academy-based awards offered by HEIs, in the main for their own teachers. Few linkages between 3 forms of ITT. Separate qualifications, separate funding, separate teacher-educators and unusual to find trainees from 3 groups, especially secondary and PCET, being taught together.
Curricula	ITT for schools teachers is centred upon key stages and national curriculum subjects. Strong elements of pedagogical-content knowledge. ITT for FE and HE teachers has historically been based upon a generic model of training, where the focus is upon general-pedagogical knowledge. The exception has been the ITT for FE teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL where there is a strong emphasis upon subject pedagogy.

Figure 4: ITT (FE) as a tracked system

It would appear that the separate development of standards and qualifications for FE and other PCET teachers exemplify all the features of a tracked system. Whichever features one compares – regulation, delivery, qualifications or curricula – the structures are unique. ITT for schools' teachers was the first area to be tightly regulated by central government with a requirement for a teaching qualification dating back to the 1970s. A separate national agency, the Teacher Training Agency[13](TTA) was formed in 1994, which from its inception had greater regulatory power than either

[13] Now the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA)

FENTO or LLUK. As well as defining standards leading to QTS, it was directly responsible for funding and for setting requirements for providers, for example over the numbers and types of teaching placements and the mentoring and workplace support that trainees would be entitled to. TTA inherited the prior work of CATE, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education that had been established in 1984. Over the 1980s CATE assumed more and more control of the ITT curriculum by specifying detailed features such as the length of ITT courses and the number of weeks trainees had to spend in schools (Bailey and Robson, 2002). By the time TTA was formed, control by the Secretary of State of the content and structure of school teacher training was firmly entrenched. Whilst FENTO and LLUK standards grew up in the diverse context of PCET with its huge range of qualifications and students, school teacher training was structured around a tightly-prescribed National Curriculum structure. The TTA standards and associated regulatory requirements (TDA, 2007; Teacher Training Agency, 2002) are part of a system where training is differentiated by phase - foundation, key stage 1, 2 , 3 etc., and subject - National Curriculum core subjects. Unlike FE teacher training, which in Borko and Putnamm's terms is founded on general pedagogical knowledge, ITT for school teachers is subject based. Trainees are grouped by national curriculum subjects and their teaching placements take place in subject departments within schools.

TTA was set up as a non-Departmental Public Body rather than an employer-based organisation. The standards it developed were not constrained by a functional analysis of occupational roles or the wider briefs of NTOs or Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The qualification framework was more straightforward in that, as autonomous awarding bodies, universities adapted their qualifications to meet the QTS standards and associated requirements. Following the introduction of OFSTED inspections in 1993, a tight regulatory regime developed whereby OFSTED grades for courses were incorporated by TDA into its quality ratings for providers which in turn affected the allocation of funding.

Yet another framework for accrediting ITT qualifications developed for HE teachers. Following the recommendation of the Dearing Report on HE, (DfEE, 1998a) universities were encouraged in 1999 to establish the Institute for Learning and Teaching in HE (ILTHE), to develop an ITT framework for HE teachers. A distinct set of standards emerged reflecting the political dynamic of HE where university vice-chancellors were keen to preserve autonomy and avoid over-regulation and compulsion on either the TDA or FENTO model. As Bailey and Robson (2002) recount the suggestion from DfEE that ILTHE establish a licence to practice for university teachers was dropped in the face of stern opposition from vice-chancellors. Early drafts of the ILTHE standards that had some similarity with the FENTO approach, in that they were couched in terms of 24 teaching outcomes, were substantially amended in favour of a much more permissive approach consisting of 5 broad areas of teaching expertise. In 2004, ILTHE was absorbed into a new organisation the Higher Education Academy, a limited company under the direct control of the HE sector. A new professional standards framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education was launched in February 2006 (H.E. Academy, 2006) in line with the recommendations of the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003b). It is significant that this refers to 'a standards framework' rather than a set of standards as occupational outcomes. The framework includes just 3 standards descriptors, unlike the scores of LLUK and FENTO standards. It is made clear that HEIs have control over how they apply the framework. The HE standards reflect the much greater autonomy of universities and the unwillingness of government to trespass too far in challenging independence.

The 3 systems continue as separate tracks with barriers for teachers who wish to move between the sectors. This is particularly the case with FE teachers wishing to transfer to schools. Whilst teachers holding QTS qualifications have historically been able to teach in FE, the reverse is not true. FE teachers are ineligible to join the General Teaching Council and now have their own equivalent body, the IfL. The 3 sets of standards present a potential dilemma for FE staff as Bailey and Robson (2002, p. 339) comment:

> "A teacher in a college may have a schedule of teaching which includes teaching 14-16-year-olds and adults and the teaching could be at GCSE and degree level. Which of these standards should he or she be required to meet"?

Indeed, one of the colleges where I interviewed trainees for my research had extensive HE provision and two trainees in my sample faced this dilemma. I will report on their experiences in Chapter 8.

ITT for FE teachers – a fragmented curriculum tradition

In the section above, I have argued that ITT for FE teachers has developed along a separate qualification track. I now go on to argue that FETT is in itself, a fragmented tradition. Its fragmentation is reflected in the contrasts between the subject content of courses and patterns of delivery that have evolved in different HE-FE partnerships, the diverse backgrounds and cultures from which FE teachers are drawn and the lack of an agreed body of knowledge on which to base FE teacher professionalism. Prior to the introduction of the FENTO standards, the content of ITT was largely decided by universities and NABs. Where theoretical content was included, it was derived from the humanities and social sciences – the philosophy, psychology. sociology and history of education. HEIs and awarding bodies decided on the balance between the theoretical and practical elements of ITT qualifications, for example how much practical experience of teaching to include and how it was to be assessed. Far from being a golden age that preceded state regulation, the picture that emerges is of a marginalised curriculum dependent upon the particular traditions of individual universities and awarding bodies and the attitudes of FE employers towards training their staff. Drawing upon a survey carried out for the Association of Colleges on ITT prior to the establishment of FENTO, Lucas (1996, p. 9) comments on the ad-hoc and idiosyncratic nature of ITT.

> "Colleges and universities have little tradition of adopting rigorous professional standards or having a strategic approach to the development and training of their staff."

Findings from two FEFC reports (FEFC, 1999; FEFC, 2000b) and from the HMI survey (OFSTED, 2003b) reinforce the above view. Carried out one year after the introduction of the 2001 Statutory Requirement, the HMI survey reported substantial variation in the content and structure of ITT courses. This was most graphically illustrated by the lack of common practice across HEIs in defining the academic level of their ITT courses or their entry requirements. The survey found examples of HEIs that defined ITT qualifications as post-graduate and awarded PGCEs to all trainees whether or not they had a first degree. Conversely, there were HEIs that offered Cert. Ed. qualifications to all their trainees, including graduates. Meanwhile, City & Guilds, the largest single awarding body for FE teacher education, had for many years offered a qualification that focussed upon developing practical teaching skills, the 7307 Teaching Certificate, pitched at level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework.

Decisions on how to sequence the taught and practical elements of ITT programmes and how to integrate theory and practice reflected the nature of ITT partnerships. The HMI survey distinguished between three types of partnership arrangement:

- "At one end of the spectrum are those where the HEI was responsible for all teaching and assessment of pre-service and in-service courses and the role of the FE colleges is to provide teaching practice and workplace support for trainees.

- At the opposite end of the spectrum are those where FE colleges are responsible for all teaching and assessment of the taught and practical elements of the training, and the HEI's role is to provide initial validation and then to monitor and review the quality and standards of the courses.

- In between, there are many other kinds of arrangements - for example, partnerships in which the pre-service courses are taught and assessed substantially by the HEI, with the FE colleges providing teaching placements, while the in-service courses are taught and assessed entirely by the FE colleges."

  (OFSTED, 2003b, p.17)

The first model, which is the least common, most closely resembles the system for the ITT of school teachers. Academic control resides in the hands of the HEI with colleges primarily responsible for providing trainees with practical teaching placements. In both the second and third types of partnership, which are the dominant models, ITT is predominantly based on FE teachers following an in-service route where they are taught by teacher-educators, usually members of staff from their own colleges. The taught and work-based elements of their ITT programmes are run concurrently, with the taught elements usually provided on a part-time day or evening basis. Both theoretical aspects and teaching skills are learnt in the college at which trainees are employed. For those trainees taking City & Guilds programmes, the provision is similar in the sense it is predominantly in-service with attendance of the taught elements on a part-time basis. At the time of the HMI survey, partnerships adopted different approaches to managing and assessing teaching practice. There was much variation, HEIs and awarding bodies rarely defined the types of experience trainees should gain, for example, the breadth of their teaching experience with respect to different types of students and different levels of courses. As a consequence it was possible for a trainee to gain a teaching qualification with a very narrow range of experience. Procedures used by HEIs and awarding bodies for assuring the standard of trainees teaching were seen as unsystematic. One of the early responses (FENTO, 2002b) to the HMI survey was the definition of a minimum number of assessed teaching practice observations for ITT qualifications.

The substantial variation of practice described by the 2003 HMI survey may reflect efforts of providers to tailor their ITT courses to the needs of the wide range of teachers who work in colleges. Unlike school and university teachers who tend to identify with their subject backgrounds, FE colleges contain contrasting sub-cultures. In a detailed historical study (Lucas, 2004) of the evolution of pedagogical traditions in ITT, Lucas argues that the ITT reforms must be seen against a legacy where the possession of technical and occupational expertise was seen as a sufficient qualification for teaching. He identifies 4 traditions of FE teaching: the *vocational specialist*, the *competent*

practitioner, the *subject specialist* and the *reflective practitioner*. The vocational specialist represents the oldest 'technical college' tradition. Teaching is perceived as the transmission of craft expertise to part-time students from industry. Teachers identify with the values and traditions of their former occupation. Within colleges, their grouping into separate departments, for example, construction or engineering and the little contact that they often have with teachers from other curriculum areas helps to reinforce their distinctive values. The tradition of the competent practitioner is associated with the movement towards NVQ and other vocational qualifications based upon competence. Teachers became specialists in assessment associated with evaluating performance in the workplace. The arrival of subject specialists is associated with the broadening of the FE curriculum during the 1960s and 1970s, when the teaching of the sciences, liberal studies and humanities became increasingly common, particularly in tertiary colleges. Teachers in this tradition are most like their counterparts in schools, in that their subject background is critical to identity. The development of subject requirements linked to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL (DfES and FENTO, 2002a; DfES and FENTO, 2002b; LLUK, 2007a) has also led to another sub-group of subject specialists. The emergence of the reflective practitioner is directly related to the increasing dominance of this model in teacher education, especially in the post-compulsory sector where trainees come from such a mix of occupational backgrounds. Lucas argues that these different traditions co-exist within FE with no overriding sense of teacher professionalism. Colleges are a federation of different sub-cultures, separated physically into departments, rather than a unified community. In an earlier case study of trainees' experiences on placement as beginning teachers, Robson (1998a, p.44) makes a similar point,

> "The diversity in these backgrounds of FE teachers and in the nature of the work they undertake leads to the development of a number of quite distinctive cultures, often within one FE college".

Workforce data on the qualifications and backgrounds of FE and other PCET teachers reinforces this picture. Figure 5 from the 2003 HMI survey, derived from a sample of 2,500 trainees from 8 HEIs and 23 FE colleges, indicates

the wide range of entry qualifications held by trainees. Pre-service courses attracted a high proportion of graduates, whilst City & Guilds and in-service Cert. Ed. courses catered for a higher proportion of trainees with craft and vocational qualifications. This data is significant because obtaining reliable national data on staff in FE has been difficult because of the high proportion of part-time and temporary staff and a history of inadequate data collection (DfES, 2003d) by colleges and other employers of teachers.

Route (numbers on which % is based)	% with Degree	% with HND/HNC or higher level professional qualification	% with craft or vocational qualification at level 3 or below	% with GCSE English language at Grade C or above or equivalent	% with GCSE mathematics at Grade C or above or equivalent
In-Service					
City & Guilds (850)	31	20	54	65	54
In-Service					
Cert Ed (866)	11	28	43	47	40
PGCE (673)	91	18	22	77	70
Pre-Service					
Cert. Ed (83)	49	25	33	83	75
PGCE (843)	96	12	9	67	59

Figure 5: Entry qualifications of FE trainees (OFSTED, 2003, p.39)

Given the inadequate data, DfES commissioned research (Parsons and Berry-Lound, 2004) to provide more systematic evidence of the backgrounds of staff in LSC-funded provision. This indicated the following:

- A workforce that is predominantly female, white and mid-aged. Nearly two thirds of teachers and tutors in post (2003-04) are women (6 in 10 in FE) and almost two thirds are over 40 years of age. Fewer than 1 in 10 are from ethnic minority groups.
- A teaching workforce that is heavily dependant on casual employment, with just over a quarter consisting of short-term contract or agency staff. A key feature of the sector is portfolio working with nearly 1 in 3 teachers in the sector holding more than one teaching or associated jobs.

Different ITT qualifications and curricula evolved to meet the diverse needs of these staff. Historically, the City & Guilds teaching certificates were designed as one of their officers described to me in a research interview "to turn craftspeople into FE teachers." Many of the teachers on City & Guilds courses were employed on a part-time basis and indeed were making the transition from their original occupation into teaching. The emphasis upon basic teaching skills – how to prepare a lesson, how to use different audio-visual aids etc. was understandable. By contrast university pre-service PGCE programmes with a higher proportion of graduates from the social sciences, arts, sciences and humanities have tended to have a stronger emphasis upon educational theory drawn from the social sciences. Since 1999, specialized routes for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL have evolved yet another distinct tradition based upon a much greater emphasis on specialist pedagogy. Both the 2003 and the later 2006 HMI survey, that focussed upon National Awarding Body ITT courses, (OFSTED, 2003b; OFSTED, 2006) pointed to the lack of formal training and opportunities for FE trainees to "develop their subject-specific pedagogy which would enable them to understand and practice the particular skills relevant to teaching their specialist area" (OFSTED 2003, p.20).

The application of theoretical knowledge to inform the general pedagogical content of ITT courses is also limited. In a thesis that examines the changing subject components of the ITT curriculum, Hobley demonstrates how regulation and standards have reduced the theoretical content drawn from the social sciences, both for schools and FE teachers (Hobley, 2008). Increasing regulation by the state of the schools curriculum was accompanied by demands that ITT should become more practically focussed and school centred. Early versions of the TTA standards were very strongly anti-theoretical (Whitty, 2006). ITT became schools centred with pre-service trainees spending two-thirds of their course (24 out of 36 weeks) on placement and much of the rest of their time at university preparing to teach national curriculum subjects determined by the state. Although Government attempts to control the ITT curriculum in FE came much later, the shift to

FENTO endorsement and the much more prescriptive LLUK standards and qualification framework has, according to Hobley, had a similar effect on the curriculum of FE teacher education. My own analysis of how standards were being translated into ITT qualifications and programmes in two case-study colleges, reported in Chapters 7 and 8 supports Hobley's view that there has been a dilution of subject knowledge derived from the social sciences, particularly since the development of a prescriptive qualification framework and assessment units (LLUK, 2007b).

Harkin (2005), in a journal article that draws upon empirical research conducted as part of an LSDA project (Harkin, Clow and Hillier, 2003) reinforces this point. He argues that only 'fragments of theory' are taught on ITT courses:

> "Constrained by time and by the understandable desire of teachers to focus on developing immediate practice, constrained also by the training and experience of teacher trainers, course of initial training offer only fragments of theory, rather than systematic bodies of knowledge.....There is no nationally recognised corpus of theory that all teacher trainers should engage with during training."
>
> (Harkin, 2005, p.172)

He goes on to argue that models of reflective practice that have traditionally been seen as the anchor of the ITT curriculum may be reduced to "a narration of practices confined inevitably to local contexts" (ibid, p.173-74) rather than the connection of trainees' immediate experience with a wider corpus of codified knowledge. The lack of a subject-specialist dimension in FE teacher education may compound this problem in that trainees may be less inclined to link their 'reflections-on-action' (Schon, 1983) to the theoretical knowledge from their own discipline. Schon's work was with professional groups such as architects who were already steeped in their subject and occupation. His emphasis on reflective practice was a reaction against the technical-rationality associated with positivism and was an attempt to place a greater stress on intuitive and tacit elements of knowledge. Although his model is not intended to be anti-theoretical or divorced from subject and other knowledge, many

commentators, for example (Harkin, 2005; Kay and Johnson, 2002) have argued that on ITT programmes, lacking a strong subject and conceptual framework, reflective practice can become no more than self-referential navel gazing.

Professionalism and managerialism

In the section above, I have argued that FE teacher education has developed in isolation from the ITT of school and HE teachers and is itself, fragmented. It lacks a common approach, linked to a coherent body of knowledge and practice that might give a unified identity to FE teachers. Robson, who has researched issues of teacher professionalism in great depth, highlights that as an occupational group, FE teachers lack the classic features often associated with established professional groups (Robson, 2006) such as defining and taking control of a body of abstract knowledge. More established professional groups have developed systems of self-regulation linked to specialized knowledge and control of entry into the occupation. The attempt by Government to impose professionalism on FE teachers, (DfES, 2006c) to define standards and establish professional organizations from above is in marked contrast to the model of professions as autonomous, self-regulating groups who develop their own specialist knowledge and standards. Writing prior to the publication of the FENTO standards and statutory regulation, Robson (1998b, p.602 - 603) summed up the position as FE teachers as a profession in the following terms:

> "Its culture is thin; uncertain of the nature or value of a shared body of professional knowledge, unable to require all entrants to qualify formally as teachers (and therefore to acquire such knowledge), compelled to accept recruits into its ranks from hugely diverse backgrounds and entry routes with no means of controlling their numbers, the professional group lacks closure and is struggling to develop any sense of its collective status or identity. With the nature of their work influenced and controlled to such a large extent from the margins, by central agencies and by external forces, with the erosion and weakening of such professional boundaries as have existed ...and with growing financial constraints and pressures (resulting in, for instance, increased numbers of part-time employees) the low status of the profession is unarguable"

Robson suggests that the impact of managerialism in post-incorporation colleges may have weakened yet further already, fragile, professional identities. In the last chapter, I sketched out the policy context associated with managerialism - the stress on market disciplines, accountability and central government targets and controls. Managerialism has also had a marked impact on pedagogy. The picture that Robson presents is reinforced by findings from, 'transforming learning cultures in FE', a substantial longitudinal research study, based upon four FE colleges and within them 16 teaching departments, (Gleeson, 2005; Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005). The authors argue that FE teachers are caught up in a rapidly changing policy and practice dynamic in which their identity has been marginalised through a mix of market, funding led and mangerialist reforms. They have lost control over the processes of teaching and learning and their own sense of professional autonomy. Gleeson (2005) distinguishes between the forces that go into the making and taking of teacher professionalism in FE. He uses the term making to refer to structural forces, especially government policies and the casual nature of much employment in colleges. The term taking refers to the role of teacher agency in constructing professional identity, given these powerful structural forces. In describing the structural context, Gleeson usefully distinguishes between 4 critical factors. These are:

- the ideology of uniqueness about FE – the fact that it has had its own funding, inspection regimes, professional bodies and lack of a research culture

- a lack of consumer voice and clout - unlike schools and HE where middle classes are firm advocates

- marketisation based upon regulated, de-regulated market reform with continuity between incorporation under the Conservative administration and the third-way politics of New Labour

- two interconnecting policy settlements - de-regulation in form of funding and intense policy intervention in the form of an LSC sector policed by audit and inspection.

Gleeson paints a picture of the FE professional as an often unwilling recipient of external policy reform rather than an empowered agent and argues that "the idea that there exists a community of professional practice in FE is a misnomer - the challenge is to build one around recognition of some ... high-trust working practices" (Gleeson, 2005, p.455). Other studies of the impact of managerialism paint a similar picture. For example in a case study of a post-incorporation college (Randle and Brady, 1997), de-professionalisation of teachers' work is seen as the outcome of management having appropriated control over the goals and organisation of the process of learning. In managerial terms, teaching is viewed as an input, with an associated cost. Learning and achievement are perceived as economic outputs rewarded by increased funding. In this context, the task of managers becomes to achieve best value for money by manipulating inputs and outputs and the task of teachers is to maximise students' achievement. External intervention by government and FEFC are seen as having changed the style of internal management. Given external funding pressures, managers became obsessed with controlling the college budget and achieving targets and developed different perceptions of quality from teachers, who still identify with a more traditional public services ethos.

Across FE more widely in the post-incorporation period, there was the paradox (Nasta, 1993) that colleges having been given 'freedom' from local education authorities were subject to intense and increased central control, particularly through the funding systems. The national funding bodies, FEFC until 2001 and then LSC measured efficiency and effectiveness with regard to tight definitions of learning and achievement (LSC, 2003a; LSC, 2004a; LSC, 2004b; Revell, 2005). Within this environment, national standards for FE teachers could be perceived as yet another form of regulation, devised by agencies of Government and imposed through statutory requirement on FE

teachers. Their aim could be seen as imposing uniformity and standardisation, rather than engaging with debates about professional autonomy and control.

3.4 Learning to teach within the wider organization

Studies of the impact of managerialism on pedagogy raise fundamental issues about the nature of the FE workplace as a site for learning. There is a growing research literature on this area, (Boreham and Morgan, 2004; Engeström, 2004a; Eraut, 2005b; Fuller, 2005; Griffiths and Guile, 2004; Kent et al., 2006) although much of it explores learning in industrial, commercial and voluntary settings rather than FE. Billet (2004, p.119) argues that all workplaces are inherently pedagogical in that their "activity is intentionally organised to structure workers access to the knowledge needed to sustain these (workplace[14]) practices." Whilst he acknowledges that learning is not the prime purpose of work organisations, he identifies 3 critical pedagogical aspects that influence how employees learn at work (Billett, 2002; Billett, 2004). The first is access to guidance, both direct and intentional, for example structured training and indirect, for example support from a more experienced co-worker. The second is the affordances the workplace provides to participate in everyday work tasks, for example to attend key meetings and take part in projects. The third is a function of individual agency, the extent to which individual employees elect to engage/exploit the affordances and overcome the constraints that their workplace offers. Billet stresses that the affordances will themselves be related to workplace hierarchies, attitudes and cultural artefacts, such as training policies and manuals.

As I commented earlier, much of the research into learning at work has been in non-educational settings. Indeed characterising FE as a workplace is to conceptualize it in new terms. There are an increasing number of studies (Avis, 2002; Avis and Bathmaker, 2004; Avis and Bathmaker, 2006; Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002; Avis, Kendal and Parsons, 2003; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Harkin, Clow and Hillier, 2003; Hodkinson and Hodkinson,

[14] My addition

2003; Lucas et al., 2004; McKelvey and Andrews, 1998; Noel, 2006; Robson, 1998a; Robson, 1999; Spenceley, 2007; Viskovic, 2005) of how the workplace context shapes teacher education. In a rare longitudinal study, Avis and Bathmaker (2006) trace the experiences of pre-service trainees from their initial teaching placement into their first teaching jobs. They draw upon Lave and Wenger's model of learning as legitimate peripheral participation in a Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In this model, derived from anthropological case studies, learning is conceived of as an aspect of social practice, a cognitive apprenticeship into the traditions and skills of an established and stable occupational community. The newcomer gradually moves from the periphery to the centre as they become familiar through participation with the social practices of the community. Applying this approach to learning to teach involves focusing upon how trainees develop their understanding and expertise through participating in work groups and communities. Bathmaker and Avis considered the extent to which trainees developed their professionalism through interaction with more experienced role models during teaching practice and in their first posts. During placement there was an expectation from the host HEI that mentors and other experienced teachers in colleges would help trainees' develop their teaching and related skills. Their research paints a bleak picture with little evidence of learning through legitimate peripheral participation.

> "In our study, instead of learning through legitimate peripheral participation, the trainees appeared to be marginalised from the communities of practice that they encountered on their teaching placement. Not only did they face difficulties with access to the communities of practice with whom they expected to engage, but the cultures of the communities of practice which they experienced did not match their own imagined professional identities and served to alienate them, rather than to encourage them to seek to participate more fully."
>
> (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005, p.60)

In a study of the experiences and reactions of 41 pre-service trainees, Wallace (2002) presents a similar picture. She analyzed trainees' perceptions of the FE workplace through drawing on evidence from their diary accounts of placement. Although the trainees in her sample undertook teaching practice in

several different FE colleges, there was a striking similarity in the negativity of their perceptions of the FE students, teachers and internal policies that they encountered. In all these accounts, the impact of managerialism in undermining fragile teacher communities is a recurring theme that mirrors the findings of Gleeson and Robson. As Bathmaker and Avis (2005, p.61) argue:

> "Their marginalisation appears to be related to the impact of current changes in FE. Poor workplace conditions, lack of resources, perceived lack of management support all affect communities which can be characterised as having low morale, being burnt out, and having lost their commitment to students."

A rare study of the initial experiences of in-service teachers (Spenceley, 2007) arrives at broadly similar conclusions. Her qualitative investigation of the learning trajectories of trainees, with no previous experience of FE, draws upon Bourdieuian perspectives. The focus is upon the career trajectories of trainees from vocational and technical backgrounds and how they construct their new identities as FE teachers. Her research demonstrates the difficulties trainees have in "making sense of the sector and their role within it." (ibid, p.95) She attributes this disengagement to the lack of support from more experienced colleagues within their departments. Again the pervasive influence of managerialism is highlighted – "the managerialist ethos that characterises educators as service providers delivering a product conceptualised as a commodity.... leading to ...a pervading culture of teacher instrumentalism" (ibid, p.88). Spenceley's emphasis upon biography and identity reflects a powerful research tradition (Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003; Hodkinson and Bloomer, 2002; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003; Hodkinson et al., 2004) that gives emphasis to the significance of biographical factors in learning and the construction of professional identities. A key concept is that of individual's learning careers (Hodkinson & Bloomer, 2002, p.38) "the development of a student's disposition towards learning over time." This concept is closely related to the Aristotelian concept of habitus, the notion that the individual carries the social structure in their own unique biography and dispositions. Ecclestone and Pryor (2008, p.375) summarise the concept of habitus when they state:

> "Habitus comprises enduring dispositions inculcated through formative life and educational experiences that interact with external conditions within specific spheres of action."

The idea of a learning career makes it possible to explore the uniqueness of each individual's career without losing sight of the contexts of work and other fields in which individual dispositions are shaped.

Findings from the 2003 and 2006 HMI surveys reinforce the often fragmented nature of support for trainees in the FE workplace (OFSTED, 2003b; OFSTED, 2006). The HMI surveys contrasted the variable workplace support given to both in-service and pre-service FE teachers with the more structured support provided for trainee secondary teachers (TDA, 2007; Teacher Training Agency, 2002). The 2003 HMI survey pointed to the isolation experienced by new FE teachers and attempted to demonstrate how trainees' development as professionals was constrained by lack of opportunities to engage with communities of subject practitioners. The extract below based on one of the interviews that I conducted with an in-service trainee as part of collecting evidence for the 2003 survey illustrates this theme very graphically:

> X was in his first year of teaching. He had responsibility for the college's curriculum for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (ALDD). He had no previous teaching experience, although in his previous job as a residential social worker he was responsible for work-based assessment and running some training courses. He is a graduate and qualified social worker. When he was interviewed for his teaching post he was told the provision for adults with learning difficulties was in 'a mess' and that he would need to revamp the curriculum. In his first term, he was teaching 23 hours per week and, at the time of the inspection visit, he had a full teaching load. Having moved house with his family and started a demanding job, he was feeling quite unsure about how he would be able to meet the FENTO standards. He had had little subject support from colleagues, who themselves were busy and, in any case, he was seen as the expert on ALDD.
>
> (OFSTED 2003, p.26-27)

3.5 Concluding comments

In this chapter I have attempted to unravel the complex pedagogy of FE teacher education by considering aspects of the formal curriculum - the areas of knowledge that have featured in ITT programmes and opening the debate about the pedagogy of the FE workplace. Although the literature I have reviewed reflects quite different theoretical perspectives, a fairly consistent picture of FE teacher education comes across – a pedagogical tradition that is isolated, fragmented and fragile. It is isolated, in the sense that it has evolved separately from the training of school and HE teachers, with different standards and qualifications. It is fragmented, because it has grown up in an ad-hoc way and reflects the diversity of training needs and the idiosyncratic practices of different HEIs and awarding bodies and the marginal status that ITT traditionally has had within colleges. Research on the experiences of pre and in-service trainees in the workplace of FE also suggest fragile communities of practice. Those making the transition into FE teaching have difficulty in finding, let alone participating in confident and stable groups of practitioners. Given this fragmented pedagogical context, the assumption of DfES policy makers that teaching in FE can be improved through imposing national standards, qualification and professional requirements seems very questionable. Even if standards are well conceived, they need fertile soil in which to take root. In outlining my research conception and design, in the chapter that follows, I will delve more deeply into some of the literature in the socio-cultural tradition that I have touched upon in this chapter and develop a model for evaluating how standards are mediated on their journey between the policy and pedagogical contexts.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH CONCEPTION AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

Brown and Dowling (1998) conceptualize research as a mode of interrogation that consists of three moves: specializing, localizing and generalizing. Specializing involves selecting from a broad theoretical field, a specific research problem. Localizing involves making explicit the findings and methods of study from within the selected empirical field in which the research is located. Generalizing "challenges the research to move beyond its local findings via processes of empirical and theoretical generalization." (Ibid, p.147)' So far, my main efforts have been to do with specializing; I have reviewed a wide range of literature, drawn from academic and official sources to locate my research and indicate its central theme. Given my focus upon the mediation of standards between the policy and pedagogical contexts, I have devoted a chapter to each of these. However, the process of specialisation is incomplete. I have only touched upon how theoretical resources drawn from the Vygotskian field shape my conceptual framework for analysing the voyage of standards. Scant attention has been given to the kernel concept of mediation and the sense in which standards can be conceived as both a mediating tool and the subject of mediation. Articulating the theoretical framework for my research questions and relating it to the literature that I reviewed in the last chapters is my first task. The second is to devote attention to the next step - localizing – clarifying the empirical fields in which my research is based and outlining how the methods of data collection and analysis relate to the theoretical framework and allow for wider generalisation.

4.2 Conceptual framework and research questions

In my introductory chapter, I defined the central concern of my research as:

- to analyse how (the FENTO and LLUK) standards are mediated as they move between the contexts of Government and those of practitioners and the implications of this for policy makers and those

responsible for the design of ITT qualifications, curricula and training programmes.

In the first sub-section below, I will provide a brief synopsis of Vygotsky's concept of mediation. I will then develop a framework for evaluating the role of standards in mediation, drawing upon different strands in socio-cultural research and activity theory especially the works of Wertsch, Engeström and Fuller and Unwin.

Vygotsky, socio-cultural traditions and tool-mediated action

Vygotsky was researching in the 1920s and 1930s in post-revolutionary Russia. His aim was to develop a Marxist theory of Psychology that gave primacy to the influence of social and cultural factors in learning and human development. His focus was on how cultural tools, as carriers of the collective intelligence and expertise of previous generations mediate our actions. Edwards (2005, p. 52) describes this succinctly when she writes:

> "A psychology which explained how the collective was incorporated into the individual through processes of mediation and which could be used to transform ways of thinking and acting to the benefit of the greater good."

Vygotsky created a dynamic unit of analysis represented as a triadic relationship between the subject, the object of learning and the cultural tool or mediating artefact.

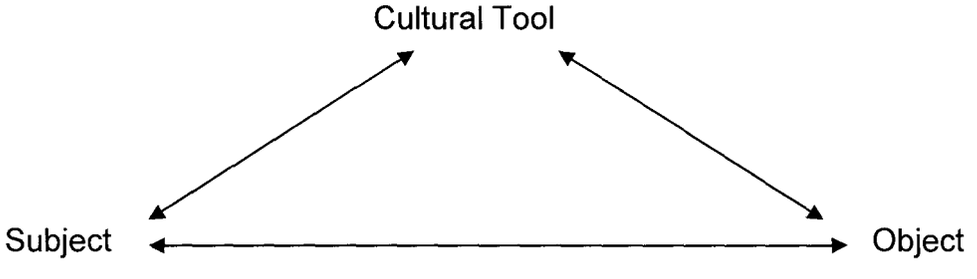


Figure 6: Vygotsky's model of tool-mediated action

In this model, the subject can be seen as either an individual or group. The object is what is being worked on or shaped through the use of the cultural tool, rather than the goal or objective. These three elements are seen as irreducible. (Cole, 1996; Wertsch, 1985; Wertsch, 1998)

> The incorporation of tools into the activity creates a new structural relationship in which the cultural (mediated) and natural (unmediated) routes operate synergistically.
>
> (Cole, 1996, p.119)

Wersch uses the image of pole vaulting (Wertsch, 1998, p.27) to illustrate the fusion between, the subject, the pole vaulter, the mediating artefact, the pole that embodies the invention and technical innovations of those who developed it (i.e. the cultural legacy) and the object - getting over the pole successfully, winning the competition or whatever is defined as the legitimate object of pole vaulting. Wertsch refers to this integration between subject, object and mediational means, as the "irreducible tension between agent (the subject) and mediational means." (Wertsch, 1998, p.141)

Mediating tools can take many forms. They can be semiotic, signs and symbols. They can be physical artefacts such as the pole, in the example above and they can involve other individuals or groups. Much of Vygotsky's writing was on the subject of semiotic mediation – the role of language and other signs, for example artefacts from the arts, in mediating thought and learning (Vygotsky, 1971; Vygotsky, 1996a; Vygotsky, 1996b; Vygotsky and Luria, 1994). He was particularly interested in how the child made use of language as a cultural tool in developing conceptual thought – less situated ways of interpreting the world. Unravelling the historical development of cultural tools, what he described as their socio-genesis was a critical element. He advocated the genetic method - tracing the origins of a cultural tool in order to unravel its nature. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that Vygotsky was writing in a Marxist context, where history was seen as a series of stages

leading to a predetermined end. He was determined to demonstrate the importance of history and culture, as opposed to biology, in shaping human development. The historical timescales that he identified were long periods; the phylogenetic or species history and the cultural-historical or changes across decades and centuries. Unravelling the historical dimension of cultural tools remains an important aspect of Vygotsky's legacy. Rogoff (2003, p.276) illustrates the historicity represented in cultural tools when she states:

> "Artefacts such as books, orthographies, computer languages and hammers are essentially social, historical objects, transforming with the ideas of both their designers and their later users. They form and are formed by the practices of their use and by related practices, in historical and anticipated communities."

The social element – the anchoring of learning in social activities is reflected in current theories of situated learning. This too may have reflected the fundamental premise in Marxism, that men play a crucial role in changing the social conditions of their existence, as they develop collective consciousness and take collective action.

> "In Vygotsky's theory cognitive development consists of individuals changing their ways of understanding, perceiving, noticing, thinking, remembering, classifying, reflecting, problem setting and solving, planning and so on – in shared endeavours with other people building on the cultural practices and traditions of communities."
>
> (ibid, 2003, p.237)

Perhaps, Vygotsky's best known concept, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), arises directly from the fundamental idea of tool mediated action. ZPD refers to the distance between understanding and knowledge gained from mediated as opposed to unmediated action (Lave and Wenger, 1991). ZPD can refer to the extra learning and capability exhibited by a learner when assisted by or collaborating with more experienced people, for example a teacher or mentor. The idea of the teacher initially 'scaffolding' a complex task before the learner tackles it, arises from this meaning of ZPD (Daniels, 2001).

In a wider sense, ZPD explores the transformation that occurs when learning is mediated through the use of cultural tools. For example, the word-processing programme, I am using dramatically expands my capacity for writing, storing, retrieving and re-working materials. Although it is a physical tool, it allows me to completely re-conceptualize the way I produce a chapter. Cultural tools carry within them knowledge that allow individuals to move beyond the confines of everyday experience or as Cole and Wertsch (2003, p.2) state:

> "Artefacts do not serve simply to facilitate mental processes that would otherwise exist. Instead they fundamentally shape and transform them."

Although my interest in how standards mediate learning within the pedagogical context of FE is a long way from the early decades of Soviet history; Vygotsky's concept of tool-mediated action offers a creative and different way of conceptualising standards. Drawing upon this fundamental idea, I treat standards as cultural tools, mediating artefacts with their own origins and trajectories which are shaped and re-shaped by subjects working in different policy and pedagogical contexts. My rationale for exploring the origins and policy context, in Chapter 2 was to characterize the nature of the historical and political environment in which standards emerged. The reason for then turning to the pedagogical context of FE teacher education in Chapter 3 was to attempt to unravel aspects of the organizational and curriculum context, where standards are used by trainees and teacher educators with quite different interests and motives from policy makers. Conceiving standards in this way is to recognize that like all cultural tools they are transformed by the contexts that they enter and that they in turn transform the activities of the agents (HEIs, NABs, teacher-educators etc.) who make use of them. This is a very different perspective from those of policy makers from the DfES and regulatory bodies, who often view standards as prescribed occupational outcomes that can be translated into FE teacher education. Examining how standards are mediated as they move between the worlds of policy and pedagogy is to recognize that like all cultural tools, they are

transformed through mediation. They are not simply transferred from the policy to the pedagogical context.

In building my conceptual model, I will first draw upon the work of Wertsch who is often seen as having interpreted Vygotsky's ideas from the modern perspective of social constructivism (Derry, 2003; Edwards, 2005; Langford, 2005). Like Vygotsky however, Wertsch has retained a focus on the genesis and transformation of cultural and especially semiotic tools, as they move between different contexts. I will then supplement Wertsch's broad model by drawing upon aspects of Engeström's representation of an activity system and Fuller and Unwin's more empirically-grounded approach of expansive learning environments. This is quite ambitious as these theories represent distinct strands in socio-cultural theory.

The production and consumption of standards

My research deals with three main questions all related to the standards for FE teachers.

- Where do they come from? (their origins and nature)
- Where do they go? (How do standards function in the pedagogical domain of FE Colleges?)
- What happens to them on route? (How are they transformed through processes of mediation?)

There is also a fourth question that involves teasing out the implications of my research for those involved in using standards-led reform as a method for achieving changes in pedagogical practice.

- What are the implications of the above for using standards as an instrument of policy reform?

I will deal with this fourth question, in my final chapter after presenting findings on the first three. The diagram incorporates these questions. It applies Wertsch's concepts of the production and consumption of cultural tools to the transfer of standards between the policy and pedagogical contexts (Wertsch, 1998).

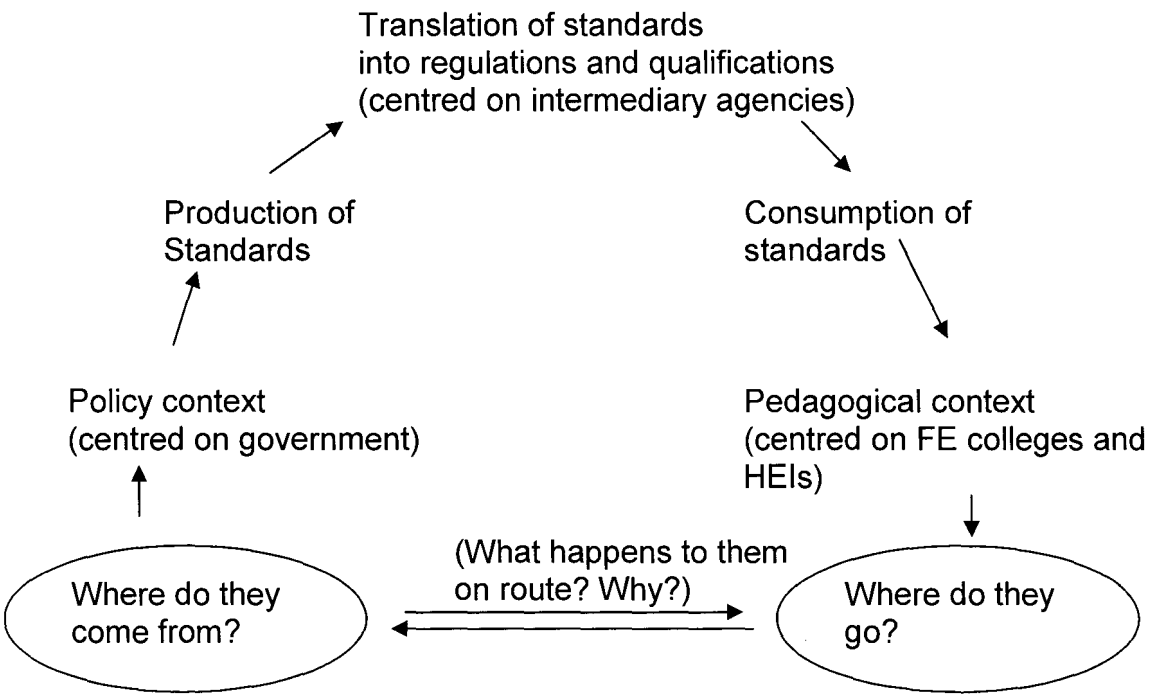


Figure 7: Mediation of national standards between the policy and pedagogical contexts.

Where do they come from? (their origins and nature)

This question involves an analysis of when and why national standards were produced, for whom, what they contained and how those who designed them envisaged that they would lead to change. It reflects a Vygotskian focus upon identifying the historical and cultural genesis of a particular cultural tool. I have covered some of this ground in Chapter 2. As I explained then, there is a recent history, in the sense of the 1997-2007 reforms that produced the FENTO and LLUK standards, and a longer history, in that the rationale for

introducing them and the form that they took was related to much older debates about the separation between the vocational and the academic and between occupational and professional models of practice. The question also involves analysing how the evolution of standards reflects the exercise of power in policy making at a national level. The roles played by different national players in the complex superstructure of governmental and quasi-governmental organisations, the DfES, FENTO, LLUK, QCA and representatives of employers, trade unions, universities and NABs. In unravelling the origins of a cultural tool aspects of its fundamental nature are revealed or as Wertsch (1998, p.142) states:

> "The forces that go into the production of a cultural tool play a major role in determining how it will (if it will[15]) be used."

In Chapter 5, I will explore the nature of the standards further by examining how the different policy and pedagogical traditions they embodied afforded and constrained the action of the agents who used them.

Where do they go (how do standards function in the pedagogical domain of the FE college)?

A very active meaning of the term consumption is implied by Wertsch (1998, p.144):

> "Cultural tools are not always facilitators of mediated action, and agents do not invariably accept them and use them; rather an agent's stance toward a mediational means is (may be[16]) characterised by resistance or even outright rejection."

As the quote makes explicit, there is a political dimension in the consumption of cultural tools; standards are not neutral, they embody assumptions about the nature of teachers' knowledge and professionalism. The interpretation of standards and regulations within FE colleges reflects relationships of power and authority – for example the pervasive influence of managerialism. The

[15] My addition
[16] My addition

analysis of the consumption of standards is about unravelling how standards function within the specific domain of the FE workplace. Focussing on mediation in this context raises issues about how standards are interpreted and used by the subjects for whom they were ostensibly designed – college managers, teacher-educators and trainees. Analysing the consumption of the standards provided a very substantial element of my fieldwork that I report in Chapters 7 and 8.

In dealing with these critical empirical questions, I draw upon wider concepts from the post-Vygotskian literature. One is Yrgo Engeström's development of Star and Griesmer's (1989) concept of cultural tools as boundary-crossing artefacts that cross different activity systems (Engeström, 1995; Engeström, 2000; Engeström, 2001). The other is Fuller and Unwin's (2004) model of expansive and restrictive learning environments. I will show how I intend to employ these critical theoretical resources, once I have completed sketching out the broader conceptual framework based on my 3 main research questions.

What happens to them on route? (How are they transformed through processes of mediation and re-contextualization?)

The voyage of standards between the worlds of policy makers and those of practitioners is complex and political. Standards are interpreted and re-interpreted by groups with different vested interests on their journey through the labyrinth of governmental agencies, national awarding bodies and HE and FE providers. In considering this journey, I define key transitions that standards go through as they are converted into different cultural artefacts: statutory regulations, qualifications, inspection frameworks, curricula and assessment instruments. I define these transition points later in the chapter as part of my rationale for the choice of empirical sites. Each transition entails processes of mediation, where agents, for example regulators, qualification designers and teacher educators use standards as a cultural tool to work upon a particular problem.

Wider theoretical resources from socio-cultural research

In the space of an intense and short life, Vygotsky created a rich theoretical legacy that has led to different traditions of scholarship. Edwards contrasts Vygotsky's work within Russian Cultural Psychology where the emphasis is on how the collective is interpreted into self with modern interactionist models where the emphasis is upon how the self adapts to the collective (Edwards, 2000; Edwards, 2001; Edwards, 2005). Lave and Wenger's work on legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice where learning is viewed as an aspect of social practice, that I touched upon in Chapter 3, fits within the latter tradition (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Whilst I have become more familiar with this complex and intertwined literature, my intention in this thesis is to draw upon particular strands that relate to my research problem, rather than attempt to capture all its richness. I will therefore now turn to two particular concepts in the broad post-Vygotskian literature that I have particularly drawn upon in framing my empirical research especially for gaining greater purchase for the analysis of how standards function in the pedagogical domains of FE colleges.

The first of these is activity theory. As I have argued, Vygotsky's aim was to develop a theory of learning and social psychology which built upon Marx's social and economic theories (Cole and Scribner, 1986). By appearing to privilege the role of language as a mediating tool over the economic relations of production and in stressing the role of individual agents in shaping learning and development, Vygotsky endangered his own position given the crude materialistic interpretation of Marxist theory prevalent in the Stalinist Soviet Union, in which he lived and worked. It was one of his chief collaborators, Leont'ev, who stuck to more orthodox Soviet lines in stressing how human learning and development were determined by collective economic activity (Langford, 2005). Instead of Vygotsky's focus on how the individual subject's development is mediated by signs and language, Leont'ev entered the Vygotskian triangle by concentrating on the object. The object could be

perceived in collective and materialistic terms – the tangible product of a Marxist social system.

This emphasis upon the wider object of collective activity is still reflected in Engeström's more recent developments of activity theory (Engeström, 1995; Engeström, 1999a; Engeström, 1999b; Engeström, 2000; Engeström, 2001; Engeström, 2004a; Engeström, 2004b). His primary interest is in the analysis of learning in the transformation of organizations i.e. with system-wide changes. His research has been based in modern industrial and public service settings - a completely different context to the one in which Leont'ev was working. He is well known for his representation of an activity system, shown in the figure below which places Vygotsky's triangle of tool-mediated action at the apex of a complex organizational pyramid.

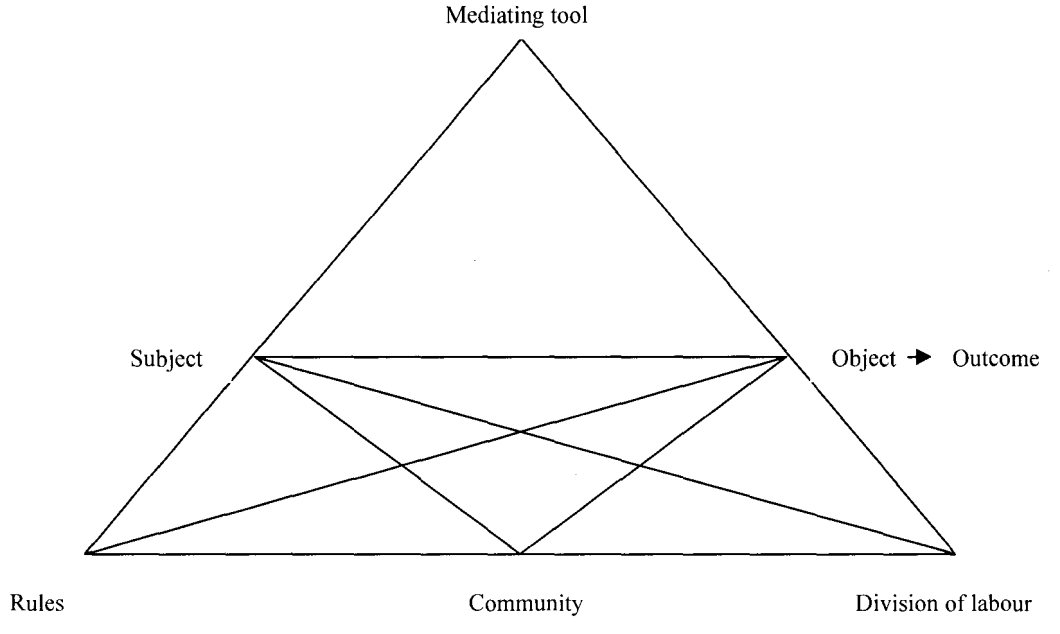


Figure 8: Engeström's model of an activity system

Engeström uses the complex diagram above to represent the shift in emphasis from the learning of individuals in what he labels as first generation activity theory to the collective aspects of learning in second generation activity theory. Mediation takes place in a wider social or organisational context, represented by the base of the pyramid where organisational rules,

the division of labour and the belonging to a community become critical influences on how individuals and groups function. The following definition of an activity system which Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.310) used in their research into workplace learning in the petrochemical industry captures the essence:

> "An activity system is a group of people whose orientation to the object of their collective activity is mediated by a division of labour, rules and cultural artefacts."

Engeström (2001) defines the basic characteristics of activity systems as follows:

- Collectivistic - the activity system as a whole is the prime unit of analysis;

- Multi-voicedness – the activity system is always a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests;

- Historicicity – the activity system takes shape and is transformed over lengthy periods of time – it has an organisational history and cultural tradition of its own

- Contradictions as a source of change – structural tensions accumulate within individual activity systems or when two or more activity systems meet.

- Expansive transformations – which result from contradictions, for example some subjects – individuals or groups challenging the effectiveness of the procedures for achieving a particular objective.

In what he describes as the third generation of activity theory, Engeström focuses upon networks of interacting activity systems, that are connected through a focus upon a common problem. He uses the concept of boundary

crossing to refer to issues that involve participants from linked activity systems in dealing with a common problem. For example, in his study into children's health care in Helsinki he demonstrates that participants in the three activity systems: the hospital, the health centre and patients' families all had different perceptions of the effectiveness of care. This was because their conception of the treatment of children was trapped within the rules, division of labour and cultural traditions of their own activity system. Through an interventionist research process (the knowledge laboratory) that involved bringing the children's families, professionals from the hospital and health centres together to consider the problems jointly, he demonstrated that problems of patient care might be resolved by horizontal working across the boundaries of the three activity centres. Engeström was able to help the different professional groups to re-conceptualise the issues and reform their procedures for the treatment of child patients. Expansive learning is central to his theory and occurs as a result of the recognition of contradictions and structural tensions between different activity centres. It involves the subjects repositioning themselves and redefining the object, so that the system as a whole can be transformed.

> "Expansive learning occurs when the group constructs new working practices by reflecting collectively on the historically-determined contradictions in the activity system that led to the failure, and by expanding its collective understanding of both the object of its activity and the means of attaining it."
>
> (Boreham & Mogan, 2004, p.309-310)

When I first encountered Engeström's work and particularly his study of children's health care in Helsinki, it seemed to offer enormous potential for application to my own research. His focus upon boundary-crossing across different activity systems seemed to have an obvious resonance with my own focus upon how standards are mediated as they cross the boundaries between different policy and pedagogical domains. The idea of working with and interviewing participants from different activity systems where standards are mediated and uncovering the key features and overriding object of each

system seemed fundamental to understanding how standards actually function in different domains. This seemed especially critical in organizational contexts where ITT is a relatively minor activity within the organization as a whole. Alternative approaches to learning in the organizational context of FE based upon Lave and Wenger's model that I reviewed in Chapter 3, pointed to the fragility of communities of practice in FE and the limitations of applying the model of legitimate peripheral participation to the learning of beginning teachers (Avis and Bathmaker, 2006). Engeström's alternative of conceptualizing an FE college as an activity system seemed promising because it provided an approach for uncovering aspects of learning within organizations in which communities of practice are at best weak. I was attracted by his description of the researcher's role:

> "Activity system as a unit of analysis calls for complementarity of the system view and the subject's view. The analyst constructs the activity system as if looking from above. At the same time, the analyst must select a subject, a member (or better yet, multiple different members) of the local activity, through whose eyes and interpretations, the activity is constructed."
>
> (Engeström, 1999, p.10).

There were aspects of his model, however with which I was both uncomfortable and which I could not realistically incorporate into my work as a research student, given that my resources for undertaking empirical work were limited to myself. Fuller and Unwin question his premise that expansive learning will follow re-conceptualization of the object by the subjects through intervention by the researcher (Fuller, 2005; Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Indeed, as an apprentice researcher I felt it would be presumptuous to see my studies as a research intervention that might transform ITT in the contexts that I researched. In my role as the HMI responsible for the 2003 and 2006 reports on FE teacher training, I had already played a critical role in attempting to influence DfES, LLUK and other organizations engaged in policy. I did not see the purpose of my personal research in terms of research intervention to transform organizational learning. I have however drawn upon Engeström in the more selective sense of conceiving the two FE colleges in which I

conducted my empirical research as activity systems and standards as a boundary-crossing artefact. His model seemed to offer the opportunity of making visible the actual rather than the ostensible focus of the activity of different groups within each college. By unravelling the functioning of colleges as activity systems, my aim was to gain a strong analytical framework for explaining how standards were mediated in this critical domain.

In its attempt to capture system-wide features, activity theory is often criticized for giving insufficient attention to the role of the subjects of the activity system in bringing about change. For this reason, many who have researched learning in the workplace have drawn on alternative perspectives, for example Bourdieau's concept of habitus as incorporating the dispositions that an individual develops through their life course as they move through different social institutions such as work and education (Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003; Hodkinson, 1995; Hodkinson and Bloomer, 2002; Hodkinson et al., 2004; Hodkinson and James, 2003). Whilst recognising the value of perspectives that emphasize the critical role of agency, in my research I foreground the cultural artefact of standards, rather than the biographies and learning careers of the trainees. Nevertheless, I did not wish to ignore the vital influence of agency. I needed a conceptual approach that enabled me to analyse how the situations occupied by trainees, teacher-educators and managers within colleges affected how they perceived and used standards within the structural context of FE colleges.

Fuller and Unwin's work (2004) on expansive learning environments was helpful here as it integrates the influence of structure and agency. Their research is based upon empirical studies of apprentices and perspectives drawn from both Activity Theory and Communities of Practice. Workplaces are conceptualised as learning environments on an expansive-restrictive continuum based upon a combination of characteristics that afford or restrict learning. Three aspects of the workplace as a learning environment are particularly highlighted:

- Forms of participation – the extent to which the learning environment gives access to participation that expands learning, particularly access to different communities of practice either within the organization or in different organizations

- Work organisation and design – the extent to which the development of individual expertise is built into job design by senior managers in the organization

- off-the-job learning and access to knowledge – the opportunities provided to trainees to widen their capabilities through exposure to wider perspectives, through attending courses and other forms of professional development.

The authors also develop the idea of an individual's learning territory (ibid, p.32) as the "unique range of learning opportunities" available to an individual working in an organization given the 3 aspects above. The concept of the individual's learning territory allows for structural factors to be taken into account; for example the way in which managers have built opportunities for participation and off-the-job learning into work roles. It also gives attention to agency - the manner in which individuals, each with unique histories and dispositions, deal with the affordances and constraints in their unique situation. Their integrative model seemed to offer a powerful framework for analysing the perceptions and situations of managers, teacher-educators and trainees within the two college sites where I conducted my fieldwork.

Unlike Engeström whose focus is upon organizational transformation through expansive learning, Fuller and Unwin's purpose (ibid, p.131) is to:

> "Identify features of the environment or work situation which influence the extent to which the workplace as a whole creates opportunities for, or barriers to, learning."

The three dimensions that shape an individual's learning territory – opportunities for participation, work organization and design and off-the-job learning seemed to resonate well with my own knowledge of teaching and the findings of the 2003 and 2006 HMI surveys (OFSTED, 2003b; OFSTED, 2006) of the experiences of in-service ITT trainees. By analysing the nature of

the learning environments in which ITT took place, I hoped to gain a deep insight into the nature of the pedagogical domain where standards are mediated.

4.3 Connecting the theoretical and empirical – defining the case

I will now shift my attention to the second of the moves that I referred to at the start of the chapter – localization – identifying the empirical domains from which the data were obtained, the methods of data collection and analysis and how these link to the research conception. Dey (1993, p.15) points out that "data, regardless of method, are in fact produced by the researcher." I agree with his position that data are not out there as evidence awaiting collection, but are determined by the personal and theoretical lens that the researcher brings to bear upon the research question. Defining the case, constructing the data and locating the researcher in the study are all crucial steps.

I see my work as a qualitative case study and agree with the view (Stake, 1998) that a "case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied." (ibid, p.86) The researcher's decision to focus upon a particular social site is compatible with different types of methods – from flexible designs using qualitative analysis to fixed designs using quantitative approaches. The label, case study is usually applied to investigations where it is important to take account of the situatedness and ecological character of the phenomena and where the researcher makes use of a wide range of data, much of it naturally occurring within the organizations involved in the fieldwork. Given that my central concern is interpreting how standards are mediated and shape activity in different contexts, I found that the following more open-ended description (Stark and Torrance, 2005) of the case study was an accurate portrayal of my activities:

> "A case study seeks to engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that social actors bring to those settings and manufacture in them. Case study assumes that 'social reality' is created through social interaction albeit situated in particular contexts and histories." (ibid, 2005, p.33)

Early on I saw my study as what Yin (2003) characterizes as a single case study. I followed his advice of developing a systematic approach – *a case study protocol* (Yin, 2003) for linking the conceptual and empirical elements of the work. Within my overall model of the production and consumption of standards, my focus was upon how standards are mediated at 3 levels – within the machinery of national government and its agencies, at the organizational level of colleges and at the individual levels of key participants, especially trainees and teacher-educators at the receiving end of standards-led reform. I concentrated my efforts on 3 transition points that became vital filters in helping to choose research sites and to identify the kinds of data I was seeking. The 3 transitions are shown in Figure 9 below.

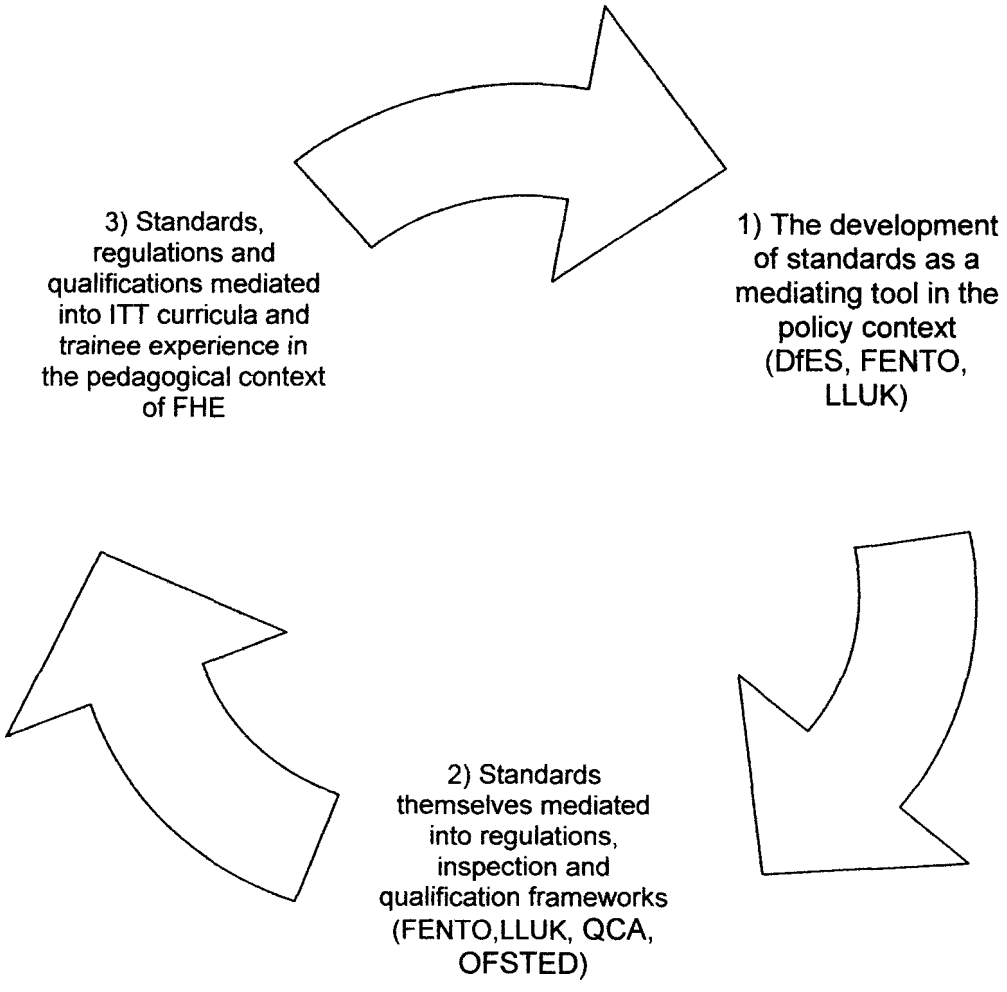


Figure 9: Key transition points in mediation of standards

- Transition 1 – Standards developed as a mediating tool in the policy context.

The first transition is to do with the ways in which standards are conceptualized and re-conceptualized in the policy domain – their production. A critical stage of my empirical work was analysing the detail of the FENTO and LLUK standards – unpacking the several hundred written descriptors and considering their meanings as semiotic artefacts. I analyzed the content and format of the standards and associated regulatory documentation and interviewed policy makers from DfES and intermediary agencies to tease out their perceptions of their function and nature. I present the findings of this analysis in Chapter 5. My aims are to analyse the different historical strands that the standards embody, to identify how the agents who produced them perceived their functions and content and to consider to what extent their intrinsic qualities make them fit for the purpose of crossing the boundaries between the policy and pedagogical spheres. This empirical focus relates to the literature that I reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, where I attempted to sketch the historical and policy contexts in which the two sets of standards emerged and raised the issue of whether teachers' knowledge can be codified in the form of occupational standards.

- Transitions 2 – Mediation of standards into legislative regulations, endorsement, qualification and inspection frameworks

Boreham and Morgan (2004, p. 320) point out that "cultural mediation occurs when people use symbolic tools to mediate their activity." Both the FENTO and LLUK standards are fairly abstract and general in nature. It is not immediately clear how they can or will be mediated into other cultural artefacts – legal regulations, inspection and qualification frameworks that ultimately frame the nature of ITT. Part of my fieldwork involved interviews with officials from DfES, FENTO, LLUK and National Awarding Bodies to explore the organizational contexts in which they worked and their perceptions about the relationships between standards, regulations and

qualifications. As part of this work, I also investigated the influence that FENTO and LLUK endorsement had, had on the design and content of the qualifications. The analysis of official documentation, for example the 2001 and 2007 statutory instruments and the OFSTED Inspection Framework (OFSTED, 2004a; OFSTED, 2004b) was also fundamental. In Chapter 6, I will report on my findings about how standards were mediated by individuals and groups in these policy and regulatory contexts.

- Transition 3 – How standards, regulations and qualifications are mediated in the pedagogical domain of the FE workplace

The final element of my empirical work involved the analysis of the consumption of standards. To research this critical aspect I based my fieldwork in contrasting FE colleges: one located in an inner-city area, the other in a provincial town. The colleges provided 3 examples of ITT qualifications that had been endorsed by FENTO. These included two HEI-validated awards, one from a provincial university, the other from a university located in a major conurbation and an example of NAB qualification - a generic ITT award validated by City & Guilds. My focus here was on how standards and associated regulations were mediated into ITT curricula and on how trainees' locations within the FE workplace affected this process. I interviewed trainees, teacher-educators and curriculum managers and made use of a wide range of course and assessment documentation.

When I began my fieldwork in June 2003, my focus was on the FENTO standards. This was soon overtaken by events; the publication of the 2003 HMI report, and the announcement of further reforms by DfES, including the redefinition of standards. My focus on the mediation of standards has remained firm, but the scope of research was widened to include the LLUK standards. In considering the first, two transitions above, I have included analysis of both the FENTO and LLUK standards. However, the detailed fieldwork in the two colleges preceded the implementation phase of the LLUK standards and my analysis is based solely on how the FENTO standards were mediated in the pedagogical domain (Chapters 7 and 8).

4.4 Constructing the data

The figure below provides a summary of the main research sites, participants and research instruments that I employed to collect data. There is a more detailed table in Appendix 1 that expands on the one below and relates the data collection to the 3 transition points.

Research sites	Research participants	Main Documentation
Policy contexts - DfES policy teams	4 civil servants involved in the FENTO and LLUK phases of reform	FENTO and LLUK standards, associated guidance from DfES and LLUK on endorsement and qualification frameworks, 2001 and 2007 teachers' qualification and CPD regulations, UCET, City & Guilds, NATFHE responses to DfES 2003-04 Consultation, OFSTED ITT (FE) Inspection Framework and Handbook, 2003 and 2006 HMI reports and OFSTED reports on individual HEI partnerships
- Regulatory agencies/national awarding bodies	1 FENTO officer, 2 LLUK officers, 2 City & Guilds officers	
- Representative groups	NATFHE official/working party, UCET post-16 committee, DfES EOT Strategy Group, FENTO and LLUK English Committees	
Pedagogical contexts • Provincial college	10 trainees (6 pre-service PGCE and 4 in-service PGCE), 2 teacher educators, 2 mentors, 2 curriculum managers, 3 senior managers (HR, Deputy Principal and faculty head) – participation in curriculum design group for 2006-07 ITT submission	At both colleges • information on the prior qualifications and educational backgrounds of trainees • course submission documents and student handbooks relating to the FENTO and LLUK standards • reports from FENTO (later SVUK) endorsers and external examiners/verifiers • college HR policies on statutory teaching qualifications • quality manuals and organizational charts • assignments and reflective diaries
• City college	8 trainees (3 in-service C&G, 2 ESOL, 3 pre-service PGCE), 3 teacher educators, 2 curriculum managers, 2 senior managers (HR, Director QA/professional development) – participation in internal college QA review of ITT courses	

Figure 10: Research participants and main documents

It will be apparent from the above table that the collection of data from documentation and interviews, from both the policy and pedagogical domains was critical. These were supplemented by evidence gathered from attending meetings at a national policy level as part of my professional role and within the 2 colleges, as part of the research process.

Documentation

The voyage of standards between the policy and pedagogical contexts is associated with the production of endless volumes of text. Each text: standards, regulations, qualifications, curricula, student handbooks etc. reflects the organizational and cultural settings in which it was produced (Hodder, 1998). As my fieldwork progressed, I realized that a powerful and unobtrusive method of analyzing how standards are translated, and one that reflects Vygotsky's emphasis on the historical development of cultural artefacts was to trace how, and if, standards were converted into different artefacts. The table below lists the different iterations of the standards that I analyzed through reference to documentation.

1999 FENTO and 2007 LLUK standards
↓
Associated DfES, QCA, FENTO and LLUK Guidance, for example qualification frameworks, assessment units, endorsement procedures relating standards to academic awards and quality assurance procedures
↓
2001 and 2007 Statutory Instruments relating standards to qualifications and other requirements for teachers
↓
HEI and National Awarding Body qualifications articulated against the standards
↓
Documents at organizational level incorporating statutory requirements into HR policies on recruitment, induction and staff development
↓
ITT course documentation from 2 colleges, for example student handbooks, assignments, teaching portfolios and assessment tasks
↓
Assignments, reflective diaries, teaching logs and other artefacts produced by trainees from 2 colleges to fulfil assessment requirements of qualifications

Figure 11 – Different iterations of the standards in documentary form

Interviews

In all I undertook 10 'one-off' interviews with individuals from national policy and regulatory agencies and 42 interviews in situ at the two colleges with trainees, teacher-educators and managers over a two-year period. I made audio recordings of all but 3 of the interviews (the exceptions were one occasion when the respondent did not wish to be recorded and two occasions when the machine broke down) and sent copies of the transcripts to those involved inviting comments about any misrepresentation or inaccuracies. I considered 4 types of interview strategy (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000): the structured interview where the interviewer organizes the content, order and wording of the question in advance; the unstructured interview, in which the interviewer is free to alter and adapt the content, sequence and wording of questions; the non-directive interview, which is guided by the interviewee, often within an overall topic provided by the interviewer and the focused interview, where the interviewer leads the interviewee to delve deeply into a particular event or life experience. Whilst I did not take these strategies to be mutually exclusive, the strategy that I employed for the policy interviews most closely approximated to what Cohen, Manion et al. describe as the focussed interview. Conversely, the interviews in the colleges where I had far more participants to interview come closer to the structured end of the continuum.

In the policy domain, each interviewee had a unique position in the machinery of government and with respect to shaping the standards and regulations. Each interview needed to be tailored to the individuals' role and organization.

> "The distinctive feature of the focussed interview is that it focuses on a respondent's subjective response to a known situation in which s/he has been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview."
>
> (Cohen, Manion et. al., 2000, p.273)

Before each interview, I identified a specific set of topics that I wished to explore and sent these together with a one-page brief about my research.

Most of the officials that I interviewed were senior policy makers and were deeply steeped in the process of ITT reform. Appendix 2 illustrates the approach that I adopted, in this example of an interview with a senior civil servant from the former DfES Standards Unit.

In the two colleges, the purpose of the interviews was very different. I was seeking to unravel how standards function in complex pedagogical contexts by evaluating the perceptions of participants with very different organizational locations and views: trainees, teacher educators and managers. I interviewed all trainees at least twice because I wanted to investigate how standards influenced their experiences of ITT as they progressed through their courses and became immersed in their workplaces. I interviewed a smaller sample of 5 trainees when they were close to completing their ITT qualifications. The main focus of these interviews is indicated in the box below.

Interview 1 was at the start of the ITT course; interview 2 was mid-course; interview 3 was towards the end of the course.	
Interview 1 (in pairs)	Compare and contrast the transitions of the two trainees into teaching (their learning careers), their initial perceptions of what it is like to work in FE, what support they are getting from tutors, mentors and line managers, whether they are aware of the FENTO standards and how they see their significance and what experience (if any) they have had of occupational standards prior to taking an ITT qualification.
Interview 2 (in pairs)	Focus more specifically on trainees' experience of the workplace (physical location, position in organization). Explore how their learning relates to the pattern of social relationships – formal and informal – how their learning is constrained and/or enabled by the physical and other circumstances – location, line manager's support, mentoring etc. How all of these practical factors affect their capacity to gather evidence against the 8 areas of the standards. Explore their perception/understanding of a specific FENTO standard by selecting one relating to lesson preparation and students' learning needs.
Interview 3 (individually)	Refer to extracts from individual trainee's portfolios, assignments and reflective diaries to anchor their discussion of the standards. Look back over the year and their achievements/perceptions in relation to the standards. How do they see the standards now in relation to their actual roles as teachers?

Figure 12 - Main focus of interviews with trainees at the 2 colleges

Appendix 3 provides the copy of the letter that I wrote to trainees prior to the first interviews, the list of questions that I used for the first interview and a typical extract from a trainee's reflective diary that formed the starting point for the third interview. As the box above illustrates I took the decision to interview the trainees in pairs. This was partly a pragmatic decision; they and I had limited time and partly because I believed and found that getting trainees to compare their experiences of the organization yielded a richer vein of evidence about their experiences of learning in these two workplaces.

Interviews with teacher-educators, mentors and college managers

To uncover wider aspects of the relationship between standards, the curriculum, assessment and support for trainees in the workplace, I interviewed the following individuals at each college.

Group	**Number**
All teacher educators	3 at City College, 2 at Provincial College
Mentors	3 – 2 at Provincial College
Line managers of in-service trainees	5 – 3 at Provincial, 2 at City College
Senior managers responsible for college curriculum and ITT	1 at each college
HR Directors	1 at each college

Figure 13 – Other college staff interviewed

My approach here was more selective. The choice of the HR managers and the senior manager (assistant principals) responsible for the curriculum was straightforward and I was fortunate to gain access to these individuals. I also wanted to interview a selection of line managers (heads of department) of in-service trainees to explore their perspectives on implementing national and organizational policies linked to the standards. Before starting the fieldwork, I visited each college and spoke to teacher-educators and senior managers about what I hoped to achieve in the research using the following brief. My aim was to define my research aims in amenable and concise terms. At the end of the first year of my research, I presented my emerging findings to the

ITT teams and to other managers from each college, as part of the process of validating the findings.

National standards (curriculum and pedagogy)

How have the FENTO standards and FETT regulations been interpreted and implemented as they have been translated into curricula, training programmes and assessment? What practical issues and conflicts have curriculum developers had to deal with? How have they been resolved?

Policy/Organization

How does the experience of the college as a workplace influence the learning and professional development of new teachers? How do FE managers, at different levels, regard ITT, the standards and what practical support do they offer their own staff taking ITT qualifications? How is ITT linked to the overall management of staff, to HR and personnel policy and practice? What practical forms of support (mentoring) are available to support the learning and development of new teachers? What impact does this have on initial professional development and the extent to which standards are achieved? What does the above reveal about the capacity of the college to support initial professional development?

Teachers/trainees

What do trainee-teachers in FE see as the major influences on their own process of 'learning to teach' i.e. developing their pedagogy and professional practice? What influence do the following have on this process – biography, prior qualifications and experience, the national standards, experiences of learning and development in the workplace? To what extent do trainees make use of standards in learning to teach? What meaning do they have for them in their transition into careers as FE teachers?

Figure 14 – Communication of research aims to colleges

At the start of each interview, I referred to this brief but then made use of specific questions/topic areas such as those shown in Appendix 6 for teacher educators and for line managers. The 5 teacher educators were a critical group for me given that they had direct experience of developing and assessing both HEI and National Awarding Body programmes and had all recently been through revalidation and FENTO endorsement of the qualifications they were responsible for. The teacher-educators also had deep insights into the wider pedagogy of the workplace – what happened to trainees outside the ITT courses. For example, the levels of support their trainees received from line managers and colleagues and their perceptions of

how policies and practices at wider institutional levels influenced teacher education. By interviewing senior and middle managers who had little day-to-day involvement in teacher education, I was able to gather contrasting perspectives on the nature and culture of the organizations. I had hoped to also gain access to staff with a formal mentoring role for ITT trainees. In the event this was unsuccessful. Neither college had developed an extensive mentoring system linked to ITT at the time of my fieldwork; the only group of trainees with a formal mentor were pre-service PGCE trainees. I confined my interviews to mentors supporting pre-service trainees. However, I was able to explore the extent to which trainees were supported by other co-workers i.e. more experienced teachers through interviewing the trainees and some of their line managers.

In all these interviews, I saw my approach as akin to the process that Eraut eloquently outlines in describing interviews with professionals in their workplaces, where a particular focus is chosen for the interview such as a key event or change (Eraut, 2005b). The interviewer, who already has contextual knowledge of the situation, attempts to get the respondent to describe and analyze their experiences. I also agree with the perspective put forward by Block who contrasts veridical views of data, taking as reality what respondents say, with representational views, where the interview is seen as an event that is co-constructed, the voices adopted by participants are a response to the interviewer's questions (Block, 2000). It would be misleading to see the co-construction of data in terms of the researcher as outsider recording the perceptions of the respondent as insider. It was apparent to all that I interviewed that I was deeply steeped in FE and ITT and the resulting conversations and transcripts reflected an exploration of mutually-negotiated meanings about a context with which both I as researcher and they as respondents were intimately familiar.

Case notes from attendance at meetings at college and national levels

The main period of my fieldwork in the colleges was between 2003 and 2006. However, I have maintained contact with managers and ITT teams and been

able to return and explore how they were adapting their provision given the national reforms and the LLUK standards. I maintained field notes of these meetings in the form of a reflective diary on each college. I found this particularly helpful for helping to clarify my ideas about the relationships between the socio-cultural literature that I was reading and the data I was gathering.

Alongside my research, I was working full-time as an HMI until December 2006 and through this professional role, I was deeply immersed in the reforms. In addition at an earlier stage of my career, I had served as a full-time adviser at the former DfEE. Through these professional roles, I had access to evidence from the following groups:

- DfEE consultation with sector groups on FENTO standards (1998)
- DfES Equipping Our Teachers Strategy Group (2003 – 2005)
- FENTO and LLUK English Committees (2001 – 2005)
- LLUK Steering Group on Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (2006)
- LLUK Steering Group on new standards (2005)
- City & Guilds National Advisory Committee (2002 – present)
- Ofsted Steering Group for 2002-03 HMI Survey and subsequent consultation/publication on an ITT (FE) inspection framework and handbook.

To keep a log of evidence about these national developments, I supplemented my research diary with more formal field notes where I judged it critical to keep a more formal record of my perceptions of what had transpired. Appendix 7 provides an example of such a note.

4.5 Locating myself in the research – ethical issues

I will now deal with the issues raised by my dual roles as a researcher and practitioner involved in the reforms. As a senior HMI I was responsible for the development of the Inspection Framework and Handbooks (OFSTED, 2004a; OFSTED, 2004b). I had the task of writing the Inspection Handbook and developing guidance on how inspectors should interpret the FENTO standards for the purposes of inspection – itself, an act of mediation! Given that I had presented the findings of the 2003 HMI survey at national conferences, I was seen by DfES, LLUK, UCET and other key agencies as a critic of the national system and an advocate of reform. This experience was invaluable to me in that I started my research with considerable knowledge of the empirical domains and access to national policy networks. I could see however, that my professional role would influence my interactions as a researcher with DfES officials and colleges. The way that I might be perceived by the research participants might raise ethical issues especially if I were seen as a powerful official from a regulatory agency. Whilst it is impossible to rigidly compartmentalise the different aspects of one's working life, I attempted to be scrupulous in distinguishing between the collection of evidence from research and inspection. For example, in all research interviews, I followed standard academic protocols (BERA, 2004) in explaining and providing in writing an outline of my position as a researcher, the potential uses of the evidence and the purpose of the interview to the respondent. In the same way, I have ensured that my contact with the two colleges that I selected was as a researcher and not as an HMI. As far as evidence from the OFSTED survey and ITT inspection reports is concerned, although I have an intimate knowledge of all the background material, I have only made use of such information as is available in the public domain through published reports.

Given that I was using interviews as one source of data, I had to consider any risks to the research participants. As I have indicated above, every interview was confirmed in writing with an explanation of its research purpose and its

ultimate use. The senior civil servants were very sensitive to these issues and checked the interview transcripts assiduously. They recognized that any comments they made would be treated confidentially and made anonymous in the publication of findings from the research. Throughout the fieldwork, I worked closely with teacher-educators and the trainees. The former were very interested in the emerging findings, especially on aspects such as the curriculum and mentoring and I was invited by both colleges to lead seminars on both my particular research and wider reforms to teacher-education.

Another, perhaps deeper issue arose for me – the difference between knowledge produced through research and inspection. I had become fully immersed in an HMI tradition where constant references are made to evidence. I was concerned how this would influence my abilities to interpret data as a sole researcher. I came back to Brown and Dowling's (1998) conception of research as a distinct mode of interrogation involving the 3 moves of specialization, localization and generalization. They suggest that the activities of other professionals can be conceptualised in a similar way. Their argument caused me to reflect upon the differences between the modes of interrogation used in research and inspection and the status of the knowledge that each produces. Given that as a sole researcher I was involved in a small-scale qualitative study where I was the key research instrument I felt that it was essential to unpack this theme, especially given the ethical issues it raised.

Unlike research, inspection is constrained by tight legislative and accountability frameworks (Bell, 2003) that determine its aims, scope and scale. The data gathered is not related explicitly to a particular epistemology or theoretical framework[17] although OFSTED claims that its methods of collecting evidence are articulated in their inspection handbooks. I have tried to capture the contrasts between research and inspection in the table below. It will be clear from this and the foregoing discussion that I regard the evidence derived from inspection, particularly the 2003 survey as useful, but

[17] That is not to say that its methodology does not often implicitly reflect a crude empiricism.

fundamentally different from the knowledge I have gained from research with a theoretical foundation in socio-cultural theories. For example, in the 2003 HMI survey, the FENTO standards were regarded as a given item of public policy. Whilst it was quite legitimate to consider their usefulness in curriculum design and assessment, it would have been beyond the boundaries of inspection to raise issues about their production and consumption, or the form of knowledge that they represent. However, it is interesting to put the emphasis the other way round and reflect upon how my personal research influenced the inspection process and findings. There is no doubt in my mind that my early reading of studies of workplace learning had a significant influence in focussing attention on this aspect of trainees' learning during the HMI survey. It was a dominant theme in the report.

	Inspection	**Research**
Key aspect		
Epistemology	Epistemological basis is not explicit. Inspection is not articulated as a particular form of knowledge or means of knowing. It is viewed as a matter of public policy, expressed in legislation that relates to many sectors of education and care.	Explicit attempt is made to locate research within the wider theoretical frame and research tradition that clarifies the object/method of enquiry (e.g. social constructivism, social realism). From the start the philosophical basis of the knowledge is articulated.
Methodology	Inspection frameworks and handbooks outline in detail the methods that inspectors will use to collect evidence and how their findings will be reported. These methods are circumscribed by the enabling legislation. There is not an explicit and overarching methodology that articulates how the judgements made relate to a wider theoretical framework.	There is an expectation that researchers will justify their choice of methods and explain how they relate to their wider epistemological stance and theoretical position. The status of their research findings, their accuracy, validity, reliability and generalizibility are seen as critical issues
Accountabilities	The aims, scope and scale of inspection are defined in legislation. In a wider sense, OFSTED is a non-Ministerial Government Department that is accountable to Parliament through the Select Committee for Education and Training. There is a difference between the historic role of HMI in providing policy advice to the DfES and the current function of inspection linked to public accountability.	A strong emphasis is placed upon 'academic freedom'. Researchers are relatively free to choose the subject, aims and methods of their research, subject to the research being conducted according to ethical guidelines. However, the activity of research carries with it responsibilities to a wider academic community – for example about transparency of findings and methodology and the onus of publication.

Target Audience	Stakeholders such as parents, students, pupils, other providers, employers, funding bodies, DfES, Parliament	Varies according to the type of research and could include stakeholders listed on the left. Key readership is academic peers.

Figure 15: Contrasts between findings derived from research and inspection

Choice of research sites and presentation of credentials as a researcher

Given the issues identified above, I felt it was critical to explain my function as a researcher and my role as an HMI. This influenced the way I went about selecting the two college sites and how I presented my credentials to research participants. I identified the following factors for selecting the two case-study colleges:

- that they offered ITT to both in-service and pre-service trainee-teachers, with a mix of ITT qualifications validated by both HEI and awarding bodies

- that the colleges were contrasting in terms of location (urban/rural) and social composition (ethnicity, social deprivation) and were within easy travelling distance (no more than 2 hours)

- that they would be willing to support the research for at least one academic year

- that they would provide me with interview access to a range of respondents including senior, middle managers, teacher-educators and trainee-teachers following both in and pre-service qualifications

- that they were colleges with which I had had no professional contact as an HMI.

I was able to find two colleges that met the criteria above. One is a large provincial FE college located in East Anglia, where I had contacts through

having worked there much earlier in my career, for 4 years until 1993. The other is an inner-city college in London that I was able to gain access to with the help of my supervisor. I describe them at the start of the Chapter 7 where I report this aspect of my findings.

4.6 Analysing the data

Data from the 2 colleges

Deciding to focus upon qualitative interpretations of meaning (standards) in natural settings (policy, regulatory bodies & colleges), had implications for the nature of data analysis and the generalizability of my findings. My choice of research sites was not on the grounds of how representative they were in a probabilistic sense (Scott and Usher, 1999), but was what Stake (1998) describes as an instrumental choice. The research sites were chosen on the basis of theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2002) – to provide insight into my research questions and to help me to refine and develop my theoretical framework. Any generalisation arising from my findings has to be seen in naturalistic terms. That is on readers recognizing aspects of their own experience in the empirical settings that are constructed by the researcher and accepting the explanation as coherent and plausible.

To assist with this mode of analysis, I made use of computer-assisted qualitative analysis software (NVivo). I coded all the interviews and the documentation (Gibbs 2002) that was available in electronic form. Analysing qualitative data has been described (Dey, 1993) as an iterative process where the researcher attempts to describe, classify and connect the data and moves between the contexts where the data originates to the contexts where it is analysed and represented, the theoretical domain. In moving between the empirical and theoretical, the researcher is intimately involved in the interpretation of meaning. Given these intrinsic features, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) see data analysis as a cyclical and reflexive activity where the researcher constantly revisits the data, the way it has been classified and the changing connections with the prior theoretical framework.

I found these descriptions aptly portrayed what I did in coding, recoding the interview transcripts, considering them in the light of documentary evidence and constantly revisiting the conceptual framework. My initial coding at the FE colleges was based upon free-standing codes that reflected the recurring themes that arose in interviews. For example in analyzing day-to-day activities at their college, every participant talked about how the internal organization influenced their work, so I started by coding these sections with the word organization. This was obviously too clumsy and unrefined a code to capture the different inflexions of meaning. I therefore re-visited my interview transcripts and created other codes that reflected different facets of the conversations, for example participants' views about the cultures of the colleges or comments about how resources influenced the pattern of teacher education. As the process continued, I found that I had too many codes to cope with, many of which overlapped and did not seem to add any value to the emerging analysis. Having expanded the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994), I then reduced it by grouping it into fewer codes and also organized the codes into sub-groups or tree codes. I initially kept the data on the 2 colleges completely separate, but at later stages of the analysis, I pulled the data together under the related codes that I had established.

By the end of this iterative process, I had created the following coding structure which resonated with both the empirical data and with my attempt at a socio-cultural analysis of how standards function in the pedagogical context of FE.

Figure 16: Codes for capturing data on mediation of standards

The four quadrants above illustrate how I grouped my data. The first set of codes, trainee perceptions and activities was used for capturing trainees' comments on their learning and career experiences and their 'takes' on particular events that arose in their day-to-day experiences at work. The sub-codes of biography, events and learning careers were used to capture the mix of factual information about their prior experience of education and employment and their unique perspectives on their ITT and immediate work situation. The trainees that I interviewed had a huge range of organisational roles and locations that reflects the diversity found more generally in FE. Fuller and Unwin's (2004) concept of the learning territory was helpful here because it neatly encapsulates the uniqueness of the individual circumstances and dispositions that individuals bring to the workplace and the particular organisational space that they inhabit when they get there. As I commented earlier, other authorities (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003; Hodkinson et al., 2004) have applied the Bourdieun concept of habitus to demonstrate how structure and agency are inseparable. The notion of the individual learning career (Hodkinson and Bloomer, 2002) was helpful for demonstrating how trainees' dispositions reflected their previous life and work experiences.

Having opportunities to participate across the organization, work with, and receive guidance from experienced role models are critical to the professional development of new teachers, as they are to other professionals such as doctors and accountants. Comments by trainees, teacher educators and managers about how patterns of relationships within each college created opportunities for professional development were grouped under the overall heading of 'opportunities for participation'. Certain relationships were particularly critical for trainees and I developed sub codes for grouping data on mentors, other co-workers, line managers and trainers. Affordances and constraints available to individual trainee-teachers differed enormously according to their locations within occupational and subject groups in each college. These differences between different departments within each college were sometimes as marked as differences between the two colleges as a whole.

In his representation of an activity system, Engeström emphasises that individual learning and the processes of mediation are inextricably linked to the collective object of the organisation. Fuller and Unwin draw upon Engeström in stressing how the acquisition of job expertise is related to how organizations deliberately build employee development into job design. From quite a different starting point the 2003 HMI report (OFSTED, 2003b) stressed the vital importance of college managers developing HR policies that regarded ITT as an aspect of wider organizational and workforce development. In my coding system, I captured these features of line management and the division of labour under the heading of organization. I tried to reflect here the emphasis of activity theory on regularly recurring behaviour that is related to the collective activities of the organisation with sub codes for organizational structure, policies and resources. From a practical point-of-view, this coding allowed me to analyze the distinct responses of line-managers, mentors and other staff and to examine how national standards were mediated into wider-organizational policies and the behaviour of line managers at each college.

The analysis of how standards had been mediated by teacher educators and trainees into curricula and training including how the formal taught elements of the ITT programme and the practice elements were integrated was captured through the use of the codes under the heading ITT course. Within this overall coding, I focussed particularly on how the standards were being translated into the qualification requirements and training programme, where I used the sub-code curriculum to capture how the standards were interpreted by teacher-educators and trainees for the purposes of course design and I used the code assessment, to analyze how standards were mediated into artefacts to evaluate trainees' achievements. Teacher-educators were faced with the extremely difficult task of re-contextualizing a set of occupational standards into a meaningful curriculum that took into account the academic level and the traditions of particular awarding bodies. Trainee-teachers had the related challenge of integrating knowledge in the form of national and organizational codes, including standards into a personal form that was meaningful to them, given their unique locations within each college.

In Figure 16, 'pedagogy and the mediation of standards' are at the centre of the diagram. This is meant to symbolize that the activities of teaching and learning lie at the heart of a complex set of relationships that span both the immediate and wider societal networks of which the individual trainees and FE organisations are inextricably a part. In his work on Vygotsky and Pedagogy, (Daniels, 2001) links pedagogy to processes of mediation – the intersection between the subject of learning, the object of learning and the cultural tools through which learning is developed. By making this connection, he relates what goes on within the immediate learning situation, in my case ITT courses within particular colleges, to wider organizational, cultural and historical factors such as the influence of standards and regulations. In similar vein, Cole (1996) argues that context should be seen as something which weaves together activity at the individual, organizational and societal level and that involves agents working with cultural artefacts from wider social settings. He rejects the idea of context as something that is external and which surrounds. My aim in putting pedagogy at the centre of the illustration was to attempt to

capture this theme; to unpick the complex tapestry within which learning and the interpretation of standards are woven.

Analysis of data from the policy contexts

My analysis of the mediation of standards within the policy context was more reliant on the examination of official documentation, supplemented with the policy interviews and field notes derived from attending national policy groups. I attempted to trace in great detail how the standards had been mediated into regulations and other artefacts as they had been worked on by different agents on their journey through the complex machinery of government. Writing from a historical perspective, Aldrich and Crook (2003) argue that documents have an inside dimension, they reflect the purpose and motive of those who create them and an outside dimension - a chronology located in time, place and physical form. To trace the way standards are mediated between different contexts, it was critical to understand both the outside and inside dimensions. By supplementing the analysis of documentation, with interviews with policy officials that had authored, or at least had a major influence, on all the key documents I was able to gain access to both these dimensions. As my fieldwork progressed I came to realise the enormous benefit of what Silverman describes as "a potential goldmine" (Siverman, 2006, p.176) of official records and other naturally occurring data; that is evidence that the researcher does not have to specifically create and is publicly available. The fact that this official documentation is easily accessible to other researchers is helpful in the sense that my particular interpretation of the mediation process is readily open to challenge and academic scrutiny.

In practical guidance for researchers faced with the task of interpreting written text, Silverman suggests 12 ethnographic questions about texts (Silverman, 2006) after (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, cited in Silverman, 2006, p.169). As the initial discussion in Chapter 5 will show, I used this list as a starting point in interpreting the different meanings of the standards and policy documentation. Although these questions arise from research grounded in the

ethnographic tradition, the questions fitted well with interpretation based upon unravelling the historical and social cultural contexts of the documentation.

Figure 17 - Ethnographic questions about texts

1. How are texts written? 2. How are they read?
3. Who writes them? 4. Who reads them?
5. For what purposes? 6. On what occasions?
7. With what outcomes? 8. What is recorded?
9. What is omitted? 10. What is taken for granted?
11. What does the writer need to take for granted about the reader(s)?
12. What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?

(Silverman, 2006 p.169)

I manually coded the huge mass of documents associated with the FENTO and LLUK standards using a matrix based upon a streamlined version of these questions.

4.7 Presentation of findings in chapters

The chapters which follow are based on the overall model of the production and consumption of standards – each is based upon the key transition points that I described earlier. Chapter 5 examines the first stage - the conceptualisation of the two sets of standards. Chapter 6 then considers their mediation into regulations and qualification frameworks. Chapters 7 and 8 then analyse how standards were mediated in the pedagogical domain of the FE workplace. The different qualifications taken by trainees in the two college sites are used as exemplars of how the FENTO and LLUK standards have been mediated into curricula, teaching and assessment instruments and the perceptions of the trainees about the roles of standards in learning to teach are considered. Early in each chapter, there is a short section on the nature of the data and method of analysis, so that the consideration of issues of research design and implementation remain a recurrent theme in all that follows.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCEPTUALIZING THE STANDARDS

"In written speech, lacking situational and expressive supports, communication must be achieved only through words and their combinations: this requires the speech activity to take complicated forms". (Vygotsky, 1996, p.242)

5.1 Introduction

Vygotsky's main concern was with semiotic mediation; how words and other signs are mediated in historical and cultural contexts and how these processes are fundamental to learning and concept development. In the extract above, he stresses the interdependence between context and communication. As written codes designed to cross the boundaries between the diverse contexts of PCET, both the FENTO and LLUK standards take on the complicated forms to which he refers. In his analysis of the production of cultural tools, Wertsch (1985) stresses that mediational means are shaped by the socio-historical context in which they emerge and by the actions of the agents who create them. It seems appropriate therefore to start my presentation of findings with interpreting the different meanings and pedagogical traditions contained in the FENTO and LLUK standards and how they reflect the socio-historical context in which they evolved. I will also return to the issues raised in Chapters 2 and 3; the question of whether the standards can be seen as competences or professional capabilities and the inherent problems with attempting to codify the knowledge of FE teachers. My primary sources of data in this chapter are official documents – the two sets of standards and associated DfES, FENTO and LLUK guidance documents. The analysis of the text of the standards is supplemented with evidence from interviews with civil servants and FENTO and LLUK officers who were directly involved in their production. The interviews provide insights into the motives, affordances and constraints perceived by key participants given the policy context in which they were working.

I interpreted this data using the questions below that I have adapted from the longer list of ethnographic questions cited by Silverman (see p.124) as one method for interpreting written documents (Silverman, 2006).

- How are the texts written?
- For what purpose/s were they written, for whom by whom?
- What do they contain? (What different pedagogical strands are embodied in them? What is omitted?)

My aim was not to conduct a detailed textual analysis for its own sake; this could have been a thesis in its own right! It was to gain sufficient insight into the nature of the FENTO and LLUK standards to evaluate how their intrinsic qualities influence their mediation into other cultural artefacts.

5.2 How are the texts written?

Before analysing the deeper issues raised by this question, for example the inherent ambiguity of both sets of standards, I will ground the discussion by providing a basic description of how the two texts are organized.

The FENTO standards are divided into three categories:

- Professional knowledge and understanding – These refer to what FENTO described as domain-wide knowledge and included areas such as the place of FE within the educational system, the nature of FE colleges as organisations etc.
- Skills and attributes – These refer to the personal skills, for example the ability of a teacher to manage time and critically reflect on practice and personal attributes, for example having personal impact and presence. FENTO argued these skills and attributes should inform all aspects of teaching
- Key areas of teaching – these are the most voluminous part of the standards. They define in great detail the activities of FE teachers and became the basis of the standards, applicable to ITT qualifications through becoming enshrined in the 2001 statutory regulation. They are divided into 8 key areas:

- Assessing learners' needs
- Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals
- Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques
- Managing the learning process
- Providing learners with support
- Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements
- Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice
- Meeting professional requirements.

Each area was broken down into sub-standards – 26 in total and each sub-standard was in turn broken down further into activities (sub-sub-standards) teachers should do as illustrated below.

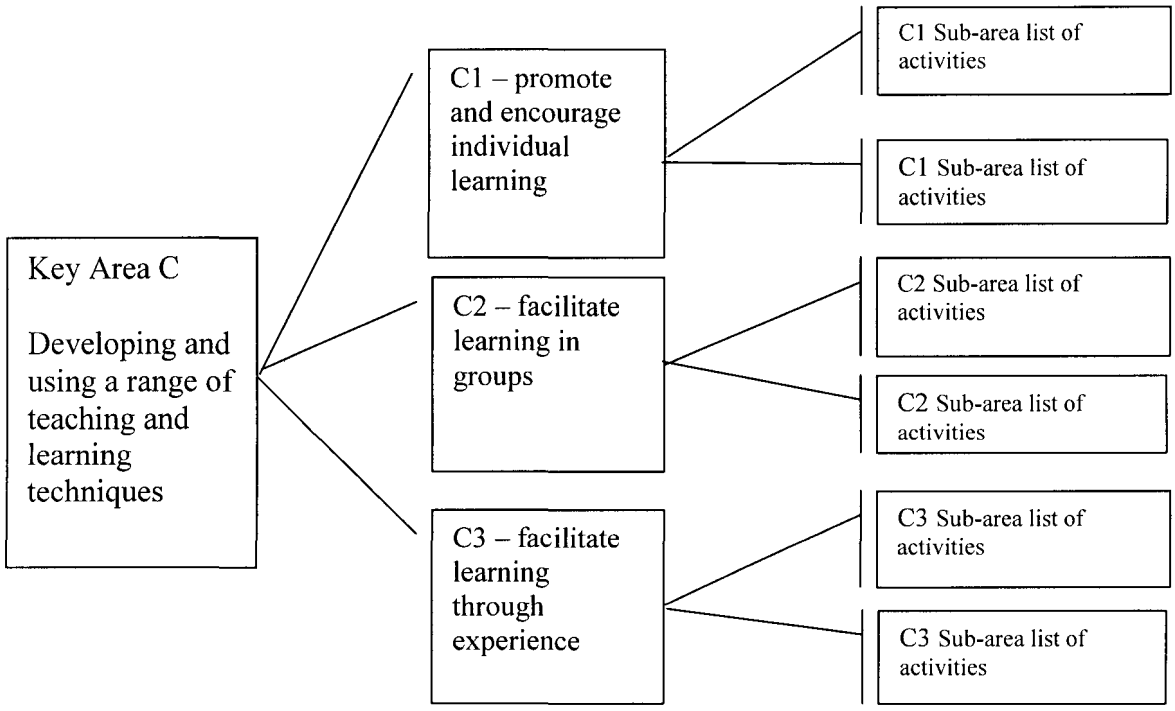


Figure 18 - Structure of the FENTO standards

Given this structure, the sheer volume of the FENTO standards is staggering. By the time the 8 key areas are broken down into sub-standards which in turn are broken down into statements of what teachers should do and understand there are 292 individual descriptors. This level of amplification with standards is not unusual. In her classic study of competence-based assessment[18], Wolf (1995) commented on the spiral of amplification that arises as the framers of standards use more and more specific language in an attempt to remove ambiguity.

Unlike the FENTO standards that they replace, the LLUK standards are intended to apply across different life long learning contexts: adult and community learning, FE and work-based learning. They are divided into 6 domains:

A Professional values and practice
B Learning and teaching
C Specialist learning and teaching
D Planning for learning
E Assessment for learning
F Access and progression

Each domain is broken down into 3 categories: professional values, professional knowledge and understanding and professional practice. To complete the full picture, reference must also be made to assessment units (LLUK, 2007b) that LLUK describes thus:

> "Following the requirements set out within Equipping Our Teachers for the Future, LLUK identified specifications, drawn from the overarching standards, for the types of teaching role performed within the sector. These role specifications are expressed in terms of units of assessment, which clearly set out the learning outcomes and assessment criteria that new teachers, tutors and trainers are expected to achieve."
> (LLUK, p6, 2007a)

[18] I do not wish to suggest here that the FENTO standards were exactly the same as competences, merely that greater and greater specificity is endemic to attempts at specifying standards. I will return to the issue of the relationship between these standards and competence statements later in the chapter.

The publication of an associated qualification framework is important because it suggests that the LLUK standards alone do not provide sufficient information with which to design qualifications. It also represents a contrast of the FENTO position, in that FENTO did not publish a separate qualification framework which translated standards into units of assessment, learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The spiral of amplification that was apparent in the FENTO standards appears to have been taken several steps further. So to unpack the LLUK standards fully, it is necessary to refer to learning outcomes and assessment criteria, as well as professional values, professional knowledge and understanding and professional practice as illustrated in the figure below.

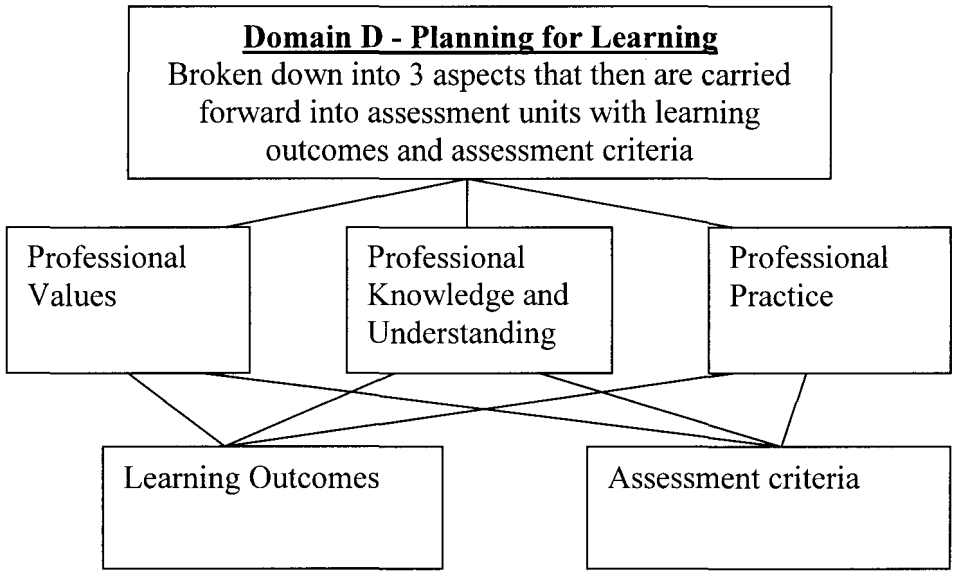


Figure 19 – Structure of LLUK standards and assessment units

In his profound reflections on the relationships between words as tools for mediating meaning, Vygotsky (1996b, p.238) observed that "a simplified syntax, condensation and a greatly reduced number of words characterize the tendency to predication that appear in external speech when the partners know what is going on." He goes on to observe that "dialogue always presupposes in the partners sufficient knowledge to permit abbreviated speech." (ibid, p.238)' and that "a word acquires its sense from the context in

which it appears: in different contexts it changes its sense .... the dictionary definition of a word is no more than a stone in the edifice of sense, no more than a potentiality that finds diversified realization in speech" (ibid, p.245). If the above is accurate then another of Vygotsky's observations might better apply to national standards. "In written speech, lacking situational and expressive supports, communication must be achieved only through words and their combinations: this requires the speech activity to take complicated forms" (ibid, p.242).

Both sets of standards (FENTO, 1999; LLUK, 2006a) illustrate the characteristics that Vygotsky identifies in that they consist of several hundred descriptors. The FENTO standards contain 292 individual descriptors. The LLUK standards (if one takes into account the standards and the assessment units) contain over 300 descriptors. The text seems to reflect the complex issue that Vygotsky raises about the relationship between words, meaning and context - the inherent ambiguity of words. Writing from the perspective of social constructivism (Gergen Kenneth and Wortham, 2001) describe the problem as follows:

> "It is the polysymous character of words, their capacity to be used in multiple contexts of relationship that both injects the language with flexibility and allows for the subtle, nuancing of action in any given setting."
> (ibid, p.128),

I will illustrate this inherent problem of ambiguity that applies to both standards with an example based upon LLUK text. I will take Domain D from the overarching standards then select a related professional value, an aspect of professional knowledge and understanding and, an aspect of professional practice. I will then *attempt* to show how these elements are carried forward into a selected assessment unit through particular learning outcomes and assessment criteria. My emphasis on the word *attempt* is meant to draw attention to the fact that this task is 'akin to detection' - one has to sift through several long documents and hundreds of words in trying to trace the relationships. Wolf (1995) observes that in specifying standards, a specialized

vocabulary is created which is often "opaque and incomprehensible to outsiders" (Wolf, 1995, p.16). This comment is certainly applicable.

So proceeding with the detection, I have selected the following *professional value* from the *Domain D 'Planning for Learning'*.

> "Teachers in the lifelong learning sector value: (AS 1)
>
> All learners, their progress and development, their learning goals and aspirations and the experience they bring to their learning."
> (LLUK, 2006a, p.3)

It is hard to dispute this statement. Few teachers across this complex sector would claim that they did not value all learners and their progress and development. The problem is that it is hard to derive any specific meaning from this general proposition without relating it to a particular situation or set of circumstances. To be facetious, should a teacher value learners whose learning goals do not include gaining the target qualification and who are disruptive to the rest of the group and bring experiences to their learning that run counter the interests of the group as a whole? Even if the answer to all these questions is yes (and I would personally agree that it should be), it is still difficult to see how the statement should be applied to particular groups of learners?

Continuing with the process of detection, I then turned to the next type of standard, *'professional knowledge and understanding'*. The first statement under Domain D 'Planning for Learning' which cross-references to the value (AS I) is:

> "Teachers in the lifelong learning sector know and understand (DK1.1):
>
> How to plan appropriate, effective, coherent and inclusive learning programmes and promote equality and engage with diversity."
> (ibid, p.10)

Again it is difficult to dispute this general statement. Equally, it is impossible to anchor the statement without reference to a particular situation: inclusive for whom? Why? Where? Given the lack of any anchorage, there is the danger in regarding the statement as pious rhetoric. If we turn to the third category of the LLUK standards *'professional practice'*, the situation does not become much clearer. The *'professional practice standard'* that correlates with DK 1.1 above is as follows:

> "Teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector:
>
> DP 1.1 Plan coherent and inclusive learning programmes that meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements, promote equality and engage with diversity effectively.
>
> (Ibid, p.10)

Having gathered these three statements, it is hard to disagree with any of them, but equally hard to see how they will communicate meaning clearly to those concerned with using the standards to define qualifications or training programmes. I therefore turn to the next source, the companion document, *'Developing Qualifications for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector in England'* (LLUK, 2007b) which LLUK describes as a guide to 'a standards based qualification framework'. My search is now for particular learning outcomes and assessment criteria that cross-refer to the three categories of standards that have been adumbrated above. The first cross-reference to these two criteria occurs on page 33 of the LLUK guidance document in the 'Unit of Assessment' entitled 'Planning and Enabling Learning'. The first learning outcome and first assessment criteria that cross-refer to the above standards are listed below.

> "Understand how to plan inclusive learning" (Learning Outcome that is part of module 'Planning and Enabling Learning')
>
> "Devise session plans which meet the aims and needs of learners" (example of an assessment criterion that cross-references DP1.1 and DK1.1)
>
> (LLUK, 2007a, p.33)

We now have examples of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, in addition to professional values, professional knowledge and understanding and professional practice. With this vast armoury of explication, the qualification designer, the teacher-educator and teacher-trainee should be extremely clear about what each standard actually means. The assessment criterion above is designed to be the most specific of the five statements above. However, it too is pitched at a very high level of generality. Indeed whether or not we had a set of standards, it is hard to imagine a committed teacher devising a session plan which did not take into account the needs and aims of learners. At the end of this process of detection, it is hard to see how those involved in designing or pursuing ITT qualifications will be any clearer about the depth of knowledge they will need to understand or the range of practice they will need to display.

Exactly the same sort of problems of interpretation faced those interpreting the FENTO standards. An experienced teacher-educator from one of the largest HE providers (Scott, 2005) comments:

> "They are called "standards" – but standards they are not. Why not? It's a small but important point that has troubled FENTO and providers ever since. Quite simply, there are no reference points or benchmarks, no specification of what level is expected, no information about what depth of knowledge is expected or what standard of performance is acceptable."
> (ibid, p.6)

Scott implies here that if the standards were more specific and the reader was informed about the depth of knowledge required then they would be fit for purpose. I am not convinced. In his work on Communities of Practice Wenger describes how groups that share common histories, work patterns and other aspects of culture develop shortcuts and simplified codes for communicating meaning (Wenger, 1998). He refers to this process as reification and also argues that reification is a product of individuals participating in a tightly-knit community of practice where an abbreviated form of communication using fewer words and symbols can convey meaning effectively. Within particular

subject communities, for example mathematicians, it is clear that a form of tightly-defined language – mathematical tools and symbols are used as a reified code for communicating common meaning between people who participate in a community bound by a common subject identity and traditions. It would seem reasonable to suggest following Wenger's notion of reification that communicating meaning effectively via the use of codified knowledge in the form of standards relies heavily on a good degree of commonality in the communities for which they are intended. The central issue then is not greater and greater specificity of language, but having codes that are rooted in a context or as Wenger would suggest in a community of practice. In this sense the diversity of FE cultures and the even greater diversity of groups across the life long learning sector that I described in Chapters 2 and 3 run counter to the aim of creating standards that convey meaning unambiguously. Wolf argues that all occupational standards suffer from this same inherent problem.

> "The ever-receding goal of total clarity derives not from bad luck or incompetence, but is actually inherent in the methodology adopted. The more serious and rigorous the attempts to specify the domain being assessed, the narrower and narrower the domain itself becomes, without, in fact, becoming fully transparent. The attempt to map out free-standing content and standards leads, again and again, to a never-ending spiral of specification." (Wolf, 1995, p.55)

5.3 For what purpose/s were they written, by whom and for whom?

Although the two sets of standards are both inherently ambiguous, they were written with significant differences of purpose, reflecting the distinct policy contexts in which they evolved. If one takes the FENTO standards on their own, without reference to the statutory regulations that followed, they are far less prescriptive than those of LLUK.

> "It is not the purpose of the standards to prescribe the detailed nature of qualifications for teachers. That responsibility rests with the various awarding bodies who may wish to use the standards for the purpose of developing awards."
>
> (FENTO, 1999, Introduction - no page number)

In contrast, the LLUK standards adopt a clearer regulatory tone from the start.

> "The professional standards ...describe in generic terms, the skills knowledge and attributes required of those who perform the wide variety of teaching and training roles undertaken within the sector with learners and employers. Not all standards will relate to all teaching roles. Rather they will supply, the basis for the development of contextualised role specifications and units of assessment, which provide benchmarks for performance in practice of the variety of roles performed by teachers, tutors and lecturers within the life long learning sector."
>
> (LLUK, 2006a, Introduction – p.11)

In the qualification guidance linked to the standards the prescriptive tone is even stronger.

> LLUK has developed units of assessment on which all awarding institutions must base their programmes of ITT
>
> (LLUK, 2007a, p.25).

These differences in purpose and tone reflect the context that I fleshed out in Chapter 2: the much more interventionist stance of reform associated with the second and third Blair administrations, reflected in *Success for All* (DfES, 2003d) and *Equipping our Teachers* (DfES, 2004a). The FENTO standards were published prior to the introduction of the 2001 Qualification requirement and had not been articulated with the intent of providing a clear assessment framework for ITT qualifications. The first Labour administration of 1997-2001 was still considering how to go about setting standards for FE teachers, given the history of voluntarism. This context strongly influenced key officers in FESDF, the organisation established by the then DfEE to develop a set of standards for FE teachers. In a research interview with a senior officer (the main author of the standards, who later played a prominent role in the establishment of FENTO) the tentative nature of the policy context that led to the setting up of FESDF is stressed.

"When I arrived on FESDF there was a lot of struggling going on about what its real purpose was and what it would do, and there was a very clear awareness that the Government had been setting up lead bodies in industries all over the area and that there had never been any kind of satisfactory solution about what we were going to do about the education sector and could we establish the education sector lead body and nothing had happened really, because I think there was a lot of in-squabbling between the different parts of the sector, Early Years, mainstream schooling, FE, HE with nobody being able to agree so what the Government had done was establish the TTA and I suppose the nearest thing to that was this kind of voluntary organisation and obviously the staff development for it. FESDF was never formally constituted you know, all they said to Terry Melia[19] was we want you to do this, can you pick some people to work with and can you explore this whole area of raising standards of teaching within the sector. So it was quite a loose brief."

Senior Officer from FESDA and later FENTO

The metamorphis of FESDF, from the loose and informal organization described above into an embryonic NTO - a body setting occupational standards was a consequence of wider policy changes - DfEE's decision to replace industry lead bodies with NTOs that I described in Chapter 2.

"And then what happened was the government announced the NTO system. Then along came the framework for establishing NTOs for occupational sectors and it became clear that this was an opportunity for the FESDF to actually put in a bid to become a NTO, and there was money to put bids together and, of course, there was money from QCA to develop standards so it suddenly became clear that actually here was an opportunity for some money and the policy framework within which to do the work that had not really existed before. So it was at that point really, it was a twin-track thing, so the Committee began to develop an NTO proposal and at the same time FEDA proposed a research project based on developing teaching and learning standards for the sector to run alongside that, and the idea was that when we got NTO status we would then submit that work as our first set of national standards to QCA."

Senior Officer from FESDA and later FENTO

The above quote illustrates the complexities involved in the production of standards - the way in which individual agents make choices given the

[19] Terry Melia was the former Chief Inspector of FEFC. DfEE gave him the task of establishing FESDF, selecting members of the committee and developing standards.

opportunities presented by a changing policy environment. Although the NTO dimension had a marked influence on the content of the standards, as I will explain in the next sub-section, the relatively permissive tone was carried through to their final publication which states:

> "It is not the purpose of the standards to prescribe the detailed nature of qualifications for teachers. That responsibility rests with the various awarding bodies who may wish to use the standards for the purpose of developing awards. Where standards exist and teachers require accreditation there will need to be an appropriate assessment strategy."
>
> (FENTO, 1999, From Introduction)

Such a permissive tone is absent from the LLUK text. Tracing the immediate historical context is all important in explaining the contrasting approaches to the role of standards. The FENTO standards were produced in advance of the development of a regulatory structure. They were both pre-NTO and pre-2001 requirement. Their overall purpose of charting the activities of FE teachers was very broad. In contrast the LLUK standards of 2006 were published as a central element of the 2004-07 reform strategy. They were influenced by the findings of the HMI survey and 7 years of combined FENTO, LLUK and SVUK experience of endorsing ITT qualifications. When I interviewed a senior SVUK officer following the publication of the LLUK standards and interim qualification guidance, she was quite open about what she described as "the degree of compliance required of HEIs and awarding bodies in terms of the way in which they organise their qualifications and even design their programmes." This was justified in terms of LLUK's legitimate role as a SSC in defining a national system of ITT qualifications with defined rules of transfer and combination, where trainees could accumulate credit for the 3 component qualifications (PTLLs, CTLLs and DTLLS) taken at different stages of their careers and at different providers.

Unpicking the organizational nexus in which the standards emerged is important to understanding their nature as cultural artefacts. FESDF was an informal project group created by DfEE to undertake a specific task under the

chairmanship of Terry Melia, the former FEFC Chief Inspector. He identified committee members who considered different drafts of the standards produced by the secretary of FESDF (a former Further Education Development Agency Officer). FENTO was launched in 1999 at the same time that the standards were published. In contrast, as an SSC, LLUK has a formal remit via the Sector Skills Development Agency from the Secretary of State to develop occupationally-specific standards and qualifications. It describes one of its 7 core tasks in the following terms (LLUK, 2006b):

> "To develop and maintain a framework of core standards and credit based qualifications which recognize prior achievement, enable learners to map career pathways and thus increase opportunities for those who work in the sector."
>
> (LLUK, 2006b, p.7)

Role of the Department (DfEE, DfES)

In unravelling what purpose, by whom, and for whom I have not so far analysed the critical role played by the Education Department (in its different organizational manifestations) in influencing the nature of standards. As many authorities (Coffield, 2006; Keep, 2006) have pointed out agencies such as FENTO and LLUK are ultimately creations and extensions of Government. It was DfEE and DfES that created and funded FENTO, LLUK and SVUK. The FENTO Annual Report for 2001-2002 shows that DfES grants and contracts made up £932,734 of the total income of £1,098,004 received (FENTO, 2002a). Similarly, grants from Government made up well over 60% of the income of LLUK (LLUK, 2007e). As part of my research, I interviewed civil servants from the former DfEE and DfES, working at different levels. These included senior civil servants, for example the official whose unit had been responsible between 1996 and 1998 for advising on policy regarding FE teaching qualifications and the Head of the DfES post-16 Standards unit, who had overall responsibility for the Success for All and post-2004 ITT reforms. It also included the leader of the policy team, responsible for the ITT consultation and policy between 2003 and 2005 and two more junior officials

that had day-to-day contact with FENTO and LLUK. In all the interviews that I conducted I was struck by the very short organizational memories of my respondents. Whilst all had an intense grasp of their immediate role and task, they found it difficult to respond to questions about how policy on ITT and standards had evolved between 1997 and 2007; for example in recollecting which teams within the Department had been responsible for this aspect of policy. Indeed one of the key authors of the 2004 EOT document explained that 3 factors: the many internal reorganizations of Government and the Department, the tradition of moving career civil servants frequently between policy areas and the increased reliance upon electronic communication, especially e-mail had made it very difficult for the Department to track the development of policy, even over a short period. When I interviewed him in 2004, at the time when the DfES was consulting the sector about the future of ITT, he commented that there was probably no one in his current team who was involved in, or could recall the responses to, the 1999-2000 consultation on ITT regulations and qualifications (DfEE, 2000), despite the obvious parallels with the *Equipping our Teachers Consultation* (DfES, 2003c). He suggested that the Department would rely upon informed outsiders, such as myself, to "plug the gaps" in its organizational memory! The table below is my attempt to piece together where policy responsibility resided within the Department for FE teaching qualifications between 1996 and 2007.

Year	**Policy team/leader**	**Policy Division**	**Wider policy unit**	**Dept.**
1996-98	No single policy team. Further Education Support Unit (FESU) have holding brief	FESU	Further Education, Youth and Training Directorate	DfEE
1998-2000	FE Staff Development and Qualifications team and Leader formed with responsibility for consultation on standards and introduction of 2001 requirements – based in Sanctuary Buildings, London	Standards, Quality and Access Division (SQAD)	As above	DfEE
2000-2002	New team leader/team based in Moorfoot wing of DfEE	Raising Standards Division	As above,	DfES replaces DfEE in 2001

2002-2003	New team leader responsible for workforce development in the LSC sector	Divisional structure in transition as Standards Unit is formed	Raising Standards Unit formed in 2002 as forerunner to post-16 Standards Unit	DfES
2003-2005	As above	Teaching and Learning Division	Post-16 Standards Unit	DfES
2005-06	New team leader with same role	As above	As above	DfES
2006-07	New ITT team within new Division and Unit	FE Workforce and Leadership Division	DfES Improvement Group replaces the post-16 Standards Unit in March 2006	DfES then DIUS from July 2007

Figure 20: Responsibility within the Department for FE teachers' qualifications

As the table illustrates, during the last decade, policy on FE teachers' qualifications and professional development has been the responsibility of 5 different policy teams, which in turn were based in 4 different civil service divisions and 4 wider policy units. The Department has itself been through 3 different manifestations, from DfEE to DfES and with its latest division since July 2007, to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). In his analysis of policy making related to the 1988 Education Reform Act, Ball (1990) comments that the state is not a unified whole but a constellation of ever-changing and often competing sites. His characterization is very apt. The table above illustrates how rapidly the decision-making structures changed in this relatively minor policy area over one decade. In Chapter 2, I sketched the broader policy canvas against which the standards developed. My aim here is to focus on the micro-picture. To examine how the changing internal structures and priorities of a Government Department reflected the wider policy themes commented upon in Chapter 2 and how these factors influenced the stances that civil servants took towards the standards. In terms of the broad policy canvas, (Hodgson and Spours, 1999; Hodgson and Spours, 2000; Hodgson and Spours, 2006) I distinguished between three periods in styles of intervention of New Labour Governments. An early phase

of voluntarism in the first Labour administration, more direct central intervention in the second and third Labour administrations and then most recently the emphasis on the Department adopting a more 'hands-off' strategic relationship with its partner agencies, such as LLUK, involving less operational involvement in the detail of policy implementation.

Reflective of a tradition of voluntarism, until 1998, the DfEE had no policy team with responsibility for this area. A small advisory unit consisting of 3 HMI, based in London, of whom I was one, the Further Education Support Unit (FESU) kept a watching brief on issues to do with quality and standards in FE, including ITT. FESU had been set up following the passage of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, as the Department was keen to retain the professional advice of HMI, during the early years of FEFC. It is important to note that prior to then, the Department had relied on LEAs for managing colleges. The new FEFC era represented unknown waters for officials and the idea of keeping a small cadre of professional educationalists i.e. HMI to provide advice was attractive. FESU's role was to 'brief' policy teams across the Department on FE matters. It was not set up as a policy-making unit with its own career civil servants. In keeping with a Departmental tradition where government had not previously directly regulated the post-compulsory sector, FESU adopted a tentative and exploratory stance on standards and teachers' qualifications. It had an observer on FESDF, whose role was to maintain a watching brief, not to direct developments. The approach was to let the sector define its own standards and then move to the next stage of consulting about how to relate standards to qualifications. However, this relatively permissive approach was rapidly challenged by another policy division based at Moorfoot from the Employment wing of the Department that had a brief to develop an NTO for FE[20] and was committed to qualifications, based upon occupational standards. A substantial difference in cultures between the London and Moorfoot wings of DfEE was clearly evident. The senior HMI from FESU responsible for this area of policy recalled that initially there was no discussion at FESDF of the NVQ/NTO path. The London-based DfEE did not have a

[20] I outlined the wider aspects of the development of NTOs in chapter 2, so will not repeat them here.

tradition of developing occupational standards for employees. Senior civil servants were steeped in policy on schools and higher education. He recollected reaction to him at meetings with officials from Moorfoot.

> "My God, we've got another guy (educationalist) from London."
> **Senior HMI from FESU**

Moorfoot had a large budget for the development of NTOs and it became clear that there was resource to support the transition of FESDF into an NTO and to support a project to define occupational standards. Moorfoot also had a contractual approach to policy formation and implementation.

> "Their notion was to define the task, the timescales and the line of accountability and get their contractors to do the work."
> **Senior HMI from FESU**

With the announcement of the introduction of a compulsory teaching qualification for new FE teachers in *the Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998b) the relatively permissive approach to reform gave way to a period of strong central direction. A new policy team headed by a career civil servant, from Moorfoot with a background in employment issues, was established to consult with the FE sector and to introduce the statutory regulations that would relate the FENTO standards to a legal requirement for FE teaching qualifications. I will deal with the detail of how the standards were mediated into a regulation in Chapter 6. For now, I want to complete my brief portrayal of the changing approaches of Departmental policy teams towards the standards.

The period from 1999 to 2005 was characterized by increasing direction and intervention by DfEE, DfES and its policy teams. Although there was almost complete separation within the Department on policy development for schools and PCET, the work of the 'Schools Standards and Effectiveness Unit', established soon after Labour came to power in 1997, under Professor Michael Barber, had been seen as a success that Ministers and senior civil servants were keen to copy for PCET. Between 1998 and the formation of the post-16 Standards Unit in 2003, the Department moved towards more and

more direct forms of intervention that in many ways mirrored the schools model. The formation of a policy division for standards, quality and access in 1998 was an early stage in this process and by 2003, a DFES post-16 Standards Unit (SU), under the leadership of a former college principal, Jane Williamson, had been created. The contrast between the relatively tentative approaches of FESU in the early years of New Labour to a full-blown SU could not be greater. The SU was a substantial undertaking with over 100 staff including educational professionals recruited from the inspectorates and providers. It was responsible for a defined national strategy, *Success for All*, whose avowed purpose was to transform education and training (DfES, 2003d). The implementation plan for 2003-04 makes clear that the reform of ITT and standards is part of a wider mission (theme 3), *Developing Teachers and Leaders of the Future*. The outcomes and targets the DfES seeks to achieve are listed - one of which is the establishment of a professional and fully qualified post-16 workforce.

The SU officials that I interviewed explained that they were engaged in a period of 'transformative leadership' as part the mission of the second Blair Government to remodel public services. This would necessitate far more managerial and directive approaches to reform. *Equipping our Teachers* (DfES, 2004a) itself was perceived as a series of projects that the Standards Unit would 'deliver' to transform ITT in the LSC sector between 2004-2007, in response to the criticisms of HMI (OFSTED, 2003b). An overall EOT strategy group was set up under the chairmanship of a senior civil servant with membership from all the key stakeholder groups. Sub-projects for the key elements of reform, the redefinition of standards, the establishment of CETTs, developing a professional framework for teacher-trainers were established. Each had clear project outcomes, milestones and accountabilities. In many respects the managerial approach adopted reflected the style of the former Employment wing of DfEE that I commented upon in Chapter 2. As far as the LLUK standards were concerned, DfES officials defined this as a project that LLUK was contracted to deliver. In turn, LLUK put out a tender for the development of standards and after a competitive process appointed a

business consultancy firm, '*5S Consulting*', to work with an LLUK steering group to develop the new set of standards.

In their responses to my questions, SU civil officials identified many inherent problems with a centrally-directed reform process of this nature. They commented on the fundamental differences between implementing policy in the compulsory and post-compulsory sectors. One senior civil servant explained that ministers and civil servants had a tradition of direct intervention in schools through legislating and creating regulations to achieve policy goals, as with the definition of the National Curriculum. This has not been the case in PCET, where the Department has had a tradition of working with intermediary organisations to achieve policy goals. In somewhat inappropriate use of language, one official described the SU as *a head without arms and legs.* The point being that the SU had to work through its partner organisations, especially LLUK and LSC to achieve the *Success for All* goals. More senior policy makers within SU recognized the intrinsic difficulties in 'raising standards' in a complex and diverse sector and the difficulties of translating standards between contexts. A senior civil servant, who had formerly been a college principal, drew out the differences between implementing educational policies for schools and PCET.

> "In parts of our work, for example on the workforce side, on the leadership college, perhaps on FE teacher training, we are, I think, realising that there are only certain things that you can actually condition and effect nationally, and other things have to be delivered and owned by the frontline, and it's important not to get confused about what is best handled nationally and what is best dealt with out on the front line. And I think the other thing that's a very key theme of Success For All is that whereas if you sort of think of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, and you perhaps think particularly of Key Stage 2 Literacy and Numeracy in the late '90s, and at this time of day everybody will sit in front of a big book and do whatever. In the Success for All strategy, I think we have recognised that in our sector we have got to put a lot of effort into winning hearts and minds to actually get the change that we want to see on the ground."
>
> **Senior Civil Servant – Post-16 Standards Unit**

The career civil servants were also philosophical in recognizing that policy initiatives come and go. They viewed the SU as an experiment that would eventually be replaced. Indeed it was to prove very short-lived. After an intense 3 years of activity that included the ITT reforms and publication of exemplar materials for providers – the teaching and learning frameworks for different subject/occupational areas - the SU ended its life at the end of March 2006. Responsibility for managing the ITT reforms passed to a DfES Improvement Group within which the policy team for ITT was housed. The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) was established in April 2006 to continue with the more developmental aspects of the EOT projects such as managing the CETTs and promoting the teaching materials.

The publication of the White Paper, *Further Education Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES, 2006b) signalled that, in the post-SU period, the Department would adopt a more strategic approach to policy making. Given the array of agencies that now exist in the PCET sector this is a complex undertaking. An official with much experience of day-to-day contact with LLUK and SVUK explained to me how this worked in practice. LLUK as an SSC has a licence to practice and contract from the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA). SSDA is the strategic and funding body for SSCs that is funded in the main by Government. DfES has its own contract with LLUK for the work that LLUK is undertaking for the Department, including that which is specific to the ITT agenda such as the development of revised standards and qualifications. Given its strategic role, DfES now gives LLUK discretion as to how it goes about the agreed tasks. Where work also involves SVUK, for example the function of endorsement, the Department also has a contract with SVUK. The greater delegation of work on 'policy implementation' to intermediary agencies such as LLUK complicates the position, in the sense that it gives much greater scope to agencies, like LLUK, to influence the detail of policy. A senior SVUK Officer engaged in the development of regulatory procedures explained the implications of the Department's more strategic approach.

"I suppose I am clear that in the model that exists in government at the moment where they are moving towards the civil service being more strategic and doing less direct delivery or administering things themselves. What we are being paid for is, in effect is being the bit between the Department and the sector. Now whether you want to call that a cushion or a breathing space, a communications channel or something, I am perfectly clear that is what we are paid to do, and that's our position in it. I also think the consequence of that scenario is that they have lost a lot of their own technical expertise. And the more they outsource the more that will continue to be the case. Therefore, though they may tell us what to do, they have to ask us what it is they should be doing in order to tell us what it is. Because they have got nobody internally, who can technically tell them what they should be doing."

Senior Officer from SVUK

5.4 What do they contain? What do they omit?

In the section above, I have tried to unravel the changing purposes, agents and policy contexts in which the two sets of standards were produced. The complex mosaic, the shifting policy responsibilities and priorities over a relatively short period may explain why both sets of standards contain many strands and are capable of different interpretations. Two inter-related themes have run through the discussion so far in this and Chapters 2 and 3. The first is whether the standards should serve as a tight regulatory device, defining precise outcomes for teachers or alternatively, be relatively permissive, leaving those designing qualifications plenty of scope for their own interpretation. The second is whether the standards should be conceived of as occupational standards with precise assessment outcomes or as the 'best professional' consensus possible, given the diversity of the PCET sector. From my earlier analysis of the text of the standards, it seems clear that the FENTO standards are located towards the permissive end of the scale and are furthest from the notion of tight occupational standards with precise assessment outcomes. In intention at least, the LLUK standards come closest to being occupational standards with an explicit regulatory purpose. Whether they achieve this intention is quite another question! To take the discussion forward, I will return to the question foreshadowed in Chapter 2; namely whether the standards can be seen as NVQ style competencies or as a

broader and more professionally-orientated attempt to capture the complex roles and activities of teachers working in a complex sector.

Occupational outcomes and the quest for total clarity in assessment

Issues of consistent interpretation of language across contexts come to a head most obviously when standards are seen as providing 'unambiguous' assessment criteria – precise occupational outcomes that make assessment completely reliable. Competency-based education and training (CBET) is associated in England with the formation of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in 1986. It is rooted in the model of developing occupational standards through detailed analysis and mapping of occupational roles and functions. Employer-led bodies, established by Government, are responsible for carrying out investigation and research to define occupational competencies. Advocates of this approach believe that is possible to develop standards that can be stated in unambiguous language to allow consistent interpretation by those who use them - trainees, their assessors, moderators, verifiers etc. This desired precision of language is captured in the extract below from the leading proponent (Jessup, 1991) of the NVQ model in the 1990s:

> "Statements must accurately communicate their intent. For accurate communication of the outcomes of competence and attainment, a precision in the use of language in such statements will need to be established, approaching that of a science. The overall model stands or falls on how effectively we can state competence and attainment."
>
> (ibid, 1991, p.134)

An expert, writing from the perspective of a researcher for a National Examining Body, (Cresswell, 2000) challenges this view that such precision is ever possible in areas like education.

> "The word standard is a notoriously slippery one. One of its more misleading aspects, when it is used in the context of educational

> assessment, is the image which it conjures up of standard measures in the physical sciences."
>
> (ibid, p.70)
>
> "We are dealing with a human linguistic artefact and to identify the standard which it represents we must interpret the language which it contains."
>
> (Ibid, p.71)

Creswell does not argue that we should abandon written standards completely. Instead we should recognise that they are useful guides, 'social constructions' that can be helpful for improving the consistency of judgement when used with care and discretion by a community of educational practitioners working within a recognised subject or occupational tradition. In one sense, he is drawing to our attention a distinction between 'facts' as perceived by social and by natural scientists. A useful distinction can be made between the brute facts of the natural sciences and the institutional facts (Searle, 1969) that arise when interpretations of cultural phenomena are at stake. For Searle, brute facts such as gravity, molecular structures etc. have an existence that is independent of the observer. Institutional facts depend upon the interpretation of cultural phenomena and are only meaningful when the participants have a shared culture and understanding of the situation – for example attempting to make sense of the rules of a game of cricket is almost impossible when participants have never played or watched the game. Pretending that standards can convey precise meaning in a scientific sense may be to impose an inappropriate positivist conception of absolute truth.

Arnal and Burwood (2003) stress the vital importance of context in their critique of elaborate criterion-based assessment systems by pointing to the tacit elements of knowledge that underlie the professional practice of teachers when using assessment criteria. They argue that teaching is more akin to connoisseurship than competence. Standards stated in general terms of desired behaviour cannot succeed in conveying meaning adequately.

> "We cannot ignore the question of interpretation, where context is all...The development of the specialist knowledge and its application in which such judgement consists is like the development of connoisseurship: it can only be acquired through repeated engagement in the appropriate practices. Academic assessors do not learn which assessment criteria are appropriate for any given piece of work in any particular context by looking them or their specific applications up in a book and then mechanistically applying them: they have to be acquired by practice."
>
> (Arnal and Burwood, 2003, p.382 - 383)

In her classic study of 'Competence-Based Assessment',(Wolf, 1995) comes to a similar conclusion.

> "Written specifications, on their own, leave large areas of ambiguity and cannot deliver on the more inflated claims made for them."
>
> (Wolf, 1995, p.67)

Wolf and Creswell argue that the notion of a '**domain**', an integral aspect of the LLUK standards, is inherently problematic. A domain normally refers to a well-defined and very circumscribed area of behaviour - for example tackling a particular mathematical operation within prescribed parameters such as being able to multiply 2-digit numbers in testing conditions, defined by experienced mathematicians. Advocates of criterion-based systems usually argue that domains need to be defined with great precision because they provide the contexts, within which assessors will make judgements using tight assessment criteria. This often leads to domains being defined in very prescriptive ways that makes them seem very artificial and removed from the practical issues faced by teachers or other professionals. In a search for reliability, the validity of assessment becomes compromised.

So given the above debate, how should the FENTO and LLUK standards be characterised? In the first section of this chapter, I demonstrated that even the LLUK standards with their accompanying assessment units don't achieve what Wolf and Creswell see as the impossible goal of clarity. Yet in the processes involved in formulating these standards aspects of the NVQ

occupational model have been followed. Wolf's definition of 3 features of CBET is helpful here.

> 1) "An emphasis on outcomes - specifically, multiple outcomes, each distinctive and separately considered – these are normally derived from an occupational mapping exercise based on a detailed analysis of the performance of existing employees in their occupational roles.
>
> 2) The belief that these can and should be specified to the point where they are 'clear' and 'transparent' - that assessors and 'third parties', should be able to understand what is being assessed and what is being achieved
>
> 3) The decoupling of assessment from particular institutions or learning programmes."
>
> (Wolf, 1995, p.2)

Both the FENTO and LLUK standards seem to reflect the first and third features above. They attempt to capture in intricate detail the performances associated with particular categories of teachers. Early consultative drafts of the FENTO standards were based on an elaborate mapping exercise (DfEE and FEDA, 1995) of occupational groups in FE aimed at defining the competencies of FE teachers. The LLUK standards and assessment units have been framed with reference to two occupational roles – the full and associate teacher functions (LLUK, 2007a; LLUK, 2007b) following an analysis by LLUK of teaching roles across the LSC sector[21]. In common with NVQs, both sets of standards were developed by employer-based organisations, specifically set up by government to define industry standards. FENTO was one of 75 National Training Organisations created in 1999, as successors to industry-lead bodies (Raggatt and Williams, 1999). LLUK is one of 25 SSCs, which succeeded NTOs from 2004 onwards. In the case of both sets of standards, there is a decoupling of the standards from particular qualifications. Indeed one of the fundamental tenets of the development of standards-based qualifications has been that the specification of standards must precede the development of qualifications and a curriculum (Nasta, 2007). This tenet has certainly applied to both the FENTO and LLUK

[21] I will critique the LLUK analysis of these 2 roles in Chapter 6.

standards. In both cases the design of qualifications followed the publication of standards. However, as I have argued neither set of standards achieves the second feature that Wolf defines – total clarity and transparency – the 'Holy Grail' that eludes all those who seek unambiguous occupational standards.

Alternative conceptions of standards including more professional paradigms

In Chapter 2, I commented on critiques of CBET from HE teacher-educators who saw the industrial competency model as inappropriate for professional teachers in FE and stressed alternative approaches based upon reflective practice. Both the FENTO and LLUK standards contain references to professionalism and reflective practice. The LLUK document is entitled, 'New Overarching Professional Standards'. The chief author of the FENTO standards was very sensitive to the tensions between professional and competency approaches as this interview extract illustrates.

> "That was what it was all about really. As soon as we started to do the project it became clear that there was huge antagonism towards any kind of set of standards for teaching and learning in the sector. There was this enormous kind of thing about professionalism and how teaching was so much more complex, was recreated every time afresh in every classroom, which I have a lot of sympathy for, so I immediately found myself in quite difficult water, because I have got this brief to end up with the standards and I've got the funding and an expectation that we'll end up with an NVQ."
>
> **Senior Officer FESDF later FENTO**

In their original form i.e. before they were reinterpreted by DfEE[22] for the purposes of regulation through the 2001 Statutory requirement, the FENTO standards attempted a delicate balancing act between being occupational competences and trying to incorporate reflective and professional perspectives. Two out of the 8 areas of teaching (g and h) are about reflective practice and meeting professional requirements.

[22] I explore how they were mediated into the 2001 regulation in the next chapter.

g. Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice

"Teachers and teaching teams need to contribute effectively to the continuous improvement of quality by evaluating their own practice ....Teachers should recognize the importance of, and engage in, critical reflection upon professional practice, within the context of the internal and external factors influencing FE."

h. Meeting professional requirements

"Teachers and teaching teams need to be effective in applying the ethics and values of the teaching profession when working with learners and their colleagues."

(FENTO, 1999, no page numbers)

These extracts are not phrased in the style of NVQ-style occupational competences. Both, at least attempt to capture aspects of reflective practice and professionalism. It is significant that the openings to each sentence refer to teachers and teaching teams. This is a clear acknowledgement of the fundamental collegiality of teachers' work, recognition that a teacher's work cannot be assessed as if s/he were working in isolation. The reference under (h) to the ethics and values of the teaching profession is another example of the attempt to build in notions of professionalism.

On face value, the LLUK standards also appear to go a long way towards recognizing the importance of professionalism. As I commented earlier in the chapter, each of the 6 domains is divided into 3 sub-sections entitled, professional values, professional knowledge and understanding and professional practice. However, when the text under each domain is unpacked a much more directive style is evident. For example, the opening phrase, to each of sub-section instructs the reader about what professionals should value and do, reflecting a more centrally-imposed view of professionalism.

Example

Domain F: Access and Progression

"Teachers in the lifelong learning sector value:

AS 4 Reflection and evaluation of their own practice and their continuing professional development as teachers."

(LLUK, 2006a, p.14)

The tone above is very similar to that used by DfES in its own policy paper on professionalism in the LSC sector (DfES, 2006c) as the extracts below illustrate. In place of promoting values of professional reflection and evaluation in the FENTO standards, what we have here is an exhortation from a much more directive DfES for teachers in the LSC sector to be professional.

> "The White Paper 'Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances' outlines the Department's intention for the sector to have a skilled and self confident workforce, with a culture of self-improvement and professionalism"
>
> (Paragraph 1.2)
>
> "Having qualifications for leaders and teaching and training staff is consistent with the desire to professionalise the workforce, as set out in the Further Education White Paper. This is underpinned by an expectation that initial qualifications and professionalisation must be reinforced by continuing professional development, in order to maintain the skills and professional standing of the workforce."
>
> (Paragraph 1.4)
>
> (DfES, 2006)

What do they omit?

Asking what the standards leave out helps to clarify what they are and what they contain. In this final section of the chapter, I will focus upon three areas. I will first consider the extent to which the standards are differentiated to recognize the range of teachers (full-time, part-time etc.) and providers in the

sector. Second, the extent to which the standards include academic knowledge derived from the social science disciplines that have traditionally formed a key part of the ITT curriculum. Third, the extent to which they focus upon the development of specialist teaching skills rooted in subjects and vocational areas that was raised in Chapter 3.

Unlike standards for school teachers (TDA, 2007) which are differentiated according to phase (primary, secondary), key stage and national curriculum subject, both the FENTO and LLUK standards are presented for whole sectors, FE in the case of the former and lifelong learning in the case of the latter. The use of the word, 'overarching' in the title of the LLUK standards makes it clear that they are intended to cover the breadth of the sector. It is left to other agencies and their policy/guidance documents, the 2001 regulation and the LLUK Qualification Framework to unpack how the standards apply to different groups of staff, for example full and part-time teachers. Neither set of standards is broken down to reflect teaching in different settings, adult and community education, work-based learning or FE or teaching to different age groups, for example 14-19 and post-19. The framers of the standards recognize the diversity of the sector, but leave differentiation aside. For example the 'values' section at the beginning of the FENTO standards states:

> "The role of the FE teacher is extremely diverse and may change over time, reflecting both the developing interests of the teacher and the changing nature of the learner."
>
> (FENTO 1999, Values Statement)

In similar vein the LLUK standards state:

> "The professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector describe, in generic terms, the skills, knowledge and attributes required of those who perform the wide variety of teaching and training roles undertaken within the sector."
>
> (LLUK, 2006a, Introduction, p.II)

The generality of both sets of standards raises the fundamental point that I commented upon at the start of chapter. Standards are intended to cover a huge diversity of contexts and do not relate to a single Community of Practice. The inherent danger it seems is that the standards are so amorphous as to be capable of a wide range of interpretations. Indeed this is precisely the conclusion that the 2003 HMI report (OFSTED, 2003b) came to with regards to the FENTO standards; their lack of specificity meant that they had not fulfilled the Department's aim of achieving a consistent standard of ITT. The QTS standards for school teachers are much more specific in that they are rooted in more distinct communities of teachers based upon phase, subject and key stage.

As part of the review of literature in Chapter 4, I referred to Hobley's (2007) and Harkin's (2007) arguments. These are that only fragments of vertical knowledge from social science disciplines survive in the ITT curriculum. An examination of the text of both sets of standards reinforces their points. In the FENTO documentation, each of the main areas of teaching has a section that refers to the *essential knowledge* that underpins the area. However, these areas of knowledge are stated in the most generic terms that don't directly refer to social science theories. The example below from a sub-standard, *'assessing learners' needs'* illustrates the lack of theoretical content. Indeed once again the areas described as essential knowledge are ambiguous, for example organizational record keeping could refer to a multitude of processes and could relate to many different disciplines.

Example from FENTO
a1 Identify and plan for the needs of potential learners

Sub-sub standards listed (a, b, c etc.)

This requires critical understanding and **essential knowledge** of:

- Organizational record-keeping and information-processing systems
- An understanding of resource constraints and how to present relevant and coherent arguments for strengthening resources
- How to match resources to the needs of the individual

- The accreditation of prior experience and learning, why it is important and the processes and procedures for carrying it out.

(FENTO, 1999, a1)

The LLUK standards actually have a sub-section entitled 'professional knowledge and understanding' under each of the 6 domains. In general these also lack any specific reference to established areas drawn from social science. For example the knowledge and understanding identified under the LLUK standard, *planning for learning,* illustrated below is as nebulous as the FENTO equivalent above.

Example from LLUK Domain D: Planning for learning

Professional knowledge and understanding

DK1.1 How to plan appropriate, effective, coherent and inclusive learning programmes that promote equality and engage with diversity.

(LLUK, 2006, p.10)

Given that they were written prior to the debate about subject-pedagogy by the 2003 HMI survey, is not surprising that the FENTO standards do not give much attention to the development of capabilities linked to teaching specialist subject and occupational areas. Just 1 of 22 extracts under the heading of *domain-wide knowledge* states that "FE teachers and teaching teams should have domain-wide knowledge and critical understanding of current developments within their own specialist vocational or academic area of expertise and ways of keeping up to date with such developments." (FENTO, 1999, statement (i) under Professional Knowledge and Understanding)

In response to the much greater emphasis on specialist teaching skills stressed in the post-2004 reforms, LLUK has given much more explicit emphasis to this area in the 2006 standards - 1 of the 6 domains of the revised standards is entitled '*specialist learning and teaching*' (LLUK, 2006a). However, when examined closely, the statements in this domain are still

pitched at a very general level, which do not go much further than the FENTO position.

> "Teachers in the lifelong learning sector:
>
> CP 1.1 Ensure that knowledge of own specialist area is current and appropriate to teaching context or
>
> CP 1.2 Provide opportunities for learners to understand how the specialist area relates to the wider social, economic and environmental context."
>
> (LLUK, 2006a, p.8)

The only area where subject-specific standards are detailed in a way that is comparable to the schools-ITT model is for Skills for Life teachers. Here both the FENTO standards (DfES and FENTO, 2002a; DfES and FENTO, 2002b) and the LLUK qualification guidance(LLUK, 2007a) describe in great detail the subject-knowledge of literacy, numeracy and ESOL that are required. Also, in the 2006 LLUK Qualification Guidance for teachers of ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy, detailed attempts are made to show how subject knowledge 'should' be integrated with more generic teaching skills.

Attempting to integrate knowledge based upon established disciplines with knowledge derived from codifying occupational performance raises the complex issues of re-contextualization that I touched upon in Chapter 4[23] - the complex question of integrating vertical knowledge rooted in subject disciplines with horizontal knowledge based upon codifying teachers' performance in the workplace (Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000). It is quite understandable, given the immense diversity of subjects and occupational areas taught in FE that, with the exception of Skills for Life, the LLUK standards do not address the complex issue of how to integrate vocational knowledge, much of which is rooted in tacit occupational traditions with the generic aspects of teaching covered by the standards. However, in omitting any serious attempt to address this aspect, they do suffer from 'Emperor's

[23] I am aware that there is another thesis here – analyzing the standards using Bernstein's theory. Whilst I can see huge power of developing this approach, I intend to stay within my original frame of examining how the generic standards have been mediated in the different contexts that they enter.

New Clothes' syndrome. By devoting 1 of 6 domains to specialist learning and teaching, they suggest a major advance in addressing subject-pedagogy in FE. As soon as the domain is examined however, one finds that the language is as ambiguous and unspecific as that of the FENTO standards and does not in any sense advance our understanding of issues of re-contextualization. The criticisms of the 2003 HMI survey report are not really addressed and little is done to achieve a central objective of the 2004 reforms that of strengthening the development of specialist teaching skills. The LLUK standards do state however, that the reader needs to turn to the qualification guidance to find detailed learning outcomes and guidance on how to incorporate specialist teaching skills in ITT programmes. So I will pursue this issue further in the next chapter when I consider how the two sets of standards have been translated into regulations and qualifications.

5.5 Concluding comments

"Mediational means are shaped by historical context and in turn shape our mediated action" (Wertsch, 1998, p.61)

In this chapter I have attempted to unravel the social and historical context in which the two sets of standards were produced. I have highlighted significant differences between the policy environments in which the two sets of standards emerged. The more permissive stance of the early Blair Government gave way to the much more interventionist and managerial style of reform, illustrated by the creation of a Standards Unit. This is reflected in the much more regulatory and directive tone of the LLUK standards. However, despite this contrast, there are significant similarities between the two sets of standards. Both attempt to cover very wide and diverse sectors – FE and lifelong learning. Unlike standards for school teachers, they are not differentiated by phase, age group or subject. They are not rooted in a particular community of practitioners. Wertsch (1998) stresses that new cultural tools provide both affordances and constraints for the agents that use them. It could be argued that the very considerable ambiguity of both sets of

standards allows very considerable discretion and power to the agencies: SVUK, OFSTED, HEIs and Awarding Bodies - that have mediated the standards into regulations, qualifications and training programmes. In the next chapter, I will examine the architecture of regulation that developed and consider how the standards as relatively 'elastic' artefacts have been translated into other mediating tools.

CHAPTER 6 FROM STANDARDS TO REGULATIONS

"Once transformed into a written text the gap between the "author' and the "'reader" widens and the possibility of multiple reinterpretation increases. The text can say many different things in different contexts ...the written text is an artefact, capable of transmission, manipulation and alteration, used and discarded, raised and recycled - "doing" different things contextually through time". (Hodder, 1996, p.112)

"Artefacts such as books, computer languages and hammers are essentially social, historical objects, transforming with the ideas of both their designers and later users. They form and are formed by the practices of their use and by related practices, in historical and anticipated communities". (Rogoff, 2003, p.276)

6.1 Introduction

The processes of adapting codified knowledge developed in the policy context into regulations, inspection and qualification frameworks designed for the pedagogical context of FE are very complex. In the previous chapter, I analyzed the inherent characteristics of the two sets of standards as mediating tools. I explained how their evolution reflected the attempt to incorporate different traditions in a rapidly-changing policy context. In this chapter, my focus is upon the second of the transition points that I identified in my research design – how standards are mediated into regulations, by agents with very different purposes from those who defined the standards, on their journey through the tangled labyrinth of governmental agencies. As Hodder (1996) states, in the extract above, the possibilities of multiple reinterpretation increases as written text are recycled in different contexts. Standards are cultural artefacts and as Rogoff (2003) points out, they are transformed with the ideas of both their designers and later users. The data for this chapter, as in the previous one are drawn from official documents: the 2001 and 2007 statutory instruments and the consultations that preceded them; FENTO and LLUK documentation on qualifications and endorsement procedures; QCA definitions of level and credit and the OFSTED Inspection Framework and Handbook. These sources are supplemented with interviews, with officials from DfES, FENTO, SVUK and City & Guilds. I also draw upon my own

professional experience as the previous HMI, responsible for writing the Inspection Framework and Handbook and as a member of several national policy groups that grappled with the difficult issues of translating 'inherently ambiguous' standards into regulations. My analysis of processes of mediation of the FENTO standards is much more detailed, as at the time of completing this thesis the 2007 regulations and final LLUK qualification guidance (LLUK, 2007c; LLUK, 2007d) had just been introduced. Insufficient time has passed to trace how the LLUK standards will eventually be translated into qualifications. I do however, at the end of the chapter draw some comparisons between the mediation of the two sets of standards based upon early developments with the latter.

6.2 The 2001 Statutory Requirement

By their nature, legal requirements have to be able to deal with questions of who, what, when and where. Unlike the FENTO and LLUK standards that are general and undifferentiated, the 2001 and 2007 qualification requirements are specific. Both statutory instruments attempt to define what categories of teachers they are applicable to (who), from what starting date (when), what exactly trainee-teachers are required to do and achieve (what) and which PCET sectors (where), FE, adult and community learning, work-based learning, they are intended to cover.

The first-ever ITT team formed in 1998, within the new Standards, Quality and Access Division (see Chapter 5) had policy responsibility for relating the standards to a legal qualification requirement. Given the permissive and open-ended nature of the FENTO standards, this was a formidable task. Furthermore there was no precedent within the Department given the history of little intervention in ITT. Between 1998 and 2000, the policy team engaged in an intense round of bilateral meetings with different interest groups and agencies such as UCET, NATFHE, individual HEIs and colleges. In May 1999 a colloquium was held with representatives from these groups on how to regulate ITT and staff development in FE (Lucas, 2003). In a background paper (DfEE, 1999b) the role of the colloquium was defined.

> "The purpose of the colloquium is to enable officials to consult key players about the emerging framework for FETT and CPD and to test reactions."
>
> (DfEE, 1999, p.1)

The overall recommendation of the colloquium - that a mandatory requirement for an FE teaching qualification should be introduced was a foregone conclusion (DfEE, 1999a). Recommendations on how the standards should be related to a framework of qualifications were in many ways very conservative, in that they attempted to build on existing ITT qualifications. There was support for a credit-based system of qualifications with units related to particular standards, which recognized the diversity of teachers, part-time, fractional and full-time within FE. The structure of ITT qualifications at that time, consisting of City & Guilds 7307 stage 1 and stage 2 certificates culminating in a Cert. Ed/PGCE, was seen as a good foundation upon which to build.

Following this intense round of consultation, DfEE published a consultation paper in February (DfEE, 2000). By then the Government had announced the formation of LSC and its commitment to a more interventionist stance to 'improving quality' in FE. A much more directive approach to relating standards to qualifications was adopted. Instead of drawing from the full breadth of the standards - the sections on professional values, professional knowledge and understanding, personal skills and personal attributes - the consultation paper selected just, the 8 key areas of teaching, as the basis of proposed qualifications. These 8 areas come closer to occupational, as opposed to professional conceptions of standards.

The consultation paper makes a critical assumption about the standards as the extracts below illustrate.

> "We consider that it is possible to break down the skills within each standard into the following categories:

a) those which do not need to feature in a first teaching qualification;

b) those which may be described as covering the minimum necessary, i.e. which provide a basic survival kit;

c) those which, when added to (b) above, provide the full range of skills needed for effective teaching across the full range of contexts found in an FE college;

d) those which go beyond teaching skills to enhance the full range of wider skills, for example in the areas of management and curriculum development, required by teachers engaged in those activities."

(DfEE, 2000, p.4)

As the extract above illustrates, a selection of the 1999 FENTO standards have been differentiated into skills sets for a three-tiered system of qualifications, related to what are described as survival, full and wider teaching roles. A fundamental translation has been made. What started off as a set of holistic standards that incorporated a range of professional and reflective features have been turned into artefacts that come closer to occupational competencies.

Broadly speaking, the three categories can be described as leading to:

a) an introduction qualification on the lines provided by the current City & Guilds 7307 Part One or equivalent;

b) an intermediate qualification, of the full City & Guilds 7307 type;

c) a threshold qualification on the lines of that currently represented by the Certificate in Education (FE) or equivalent.

(Ibid, 2000, p.4)

This extract goes further in that the standards and 3 teaching roles are linked to 3 types of qualification. The original FENTO standards that incorporated different pedagogical strands have been converted into more functional outcomes that relate to 3 notional teaching roles. I am not 'accusing' DfEE officials, here of polluting 'the pure' version of the standards. I am simply describing how through processes of mediation, cultural artefacts are

constantly changed to meet the objects of agents; in this case a DfEE policy team, working to deal with the political imperative of regulating a complex and hitherto unregulated area.

Following this consultation, FENTO published a new version of the standards entitled, *Standards for Teacher Training Qualifications for Further Education in England* (FENTO, 2001b). The table below illustrates how one single standard *C1 – promote and encourage individual learning,* becomes elaborated as it is mediated into three stages of a qualification. The Certificate or Stage 3 contains the full sub-set of standards because it applied to full-time teachers. The Introduction requirement or Stage 1 contains the fewest, just two standards, selected from the full set as it was seen as applying to part-time teachers with a small teaching commitment. Of course, this form of disaggregating raises the interesting question of whether a particular standard can be meaningful when it is taken away from its wider set. For example, is it possible or desirable for any teacher, whether at Introductory or Certification stage to identify and produce appropriate teaching and learning materials (C1d) without having also defined their learning goals (C1b)? Such questions were left to qualification designers to resolve. I will explore how they dealt with them when I consider examples of ITT qualifications in the next chapter.

Introduction (Stage 1)	Intermediate (Stage 2)	Certification Stage (Stage 3)
C1 – promote and encourage individual learning d Identify and produce appropriate teaching and learning materials that engage learners' interest and reinforce their learning g Evaluate the effectiveness of learning	**C1** b Agree learning goals and targets that support individual needs and aspirations within available resources d Identify and produce appropriate teaching and learning materials that engage learners' interest and reinforce their learning e Recognise and build on the experiences which learners bring to the programme g Evaluate the effectiveness of learning h Acknowledge the effect of resource constraints and make best use of resources available	**C1** a Establish and agree individual learning needs, aspirations and preferred learning styles b Agree learning goals and targets that support individual needs and aspirations within available resources c Produce learning plans that encourage individual learning d Identify and produce appropriate teaching and learning materials that engage learners' interest and reinforce their learning e Recognise and build on the experiences which learners bring to the programme f Agree a learning contract with the learner

		g Evaluate the effectiveness of learning h Acknowledge the effect of resource constraints and make best use of resources available

Figure 21: Breakdown of standards into 3 stages

(FENTO, 2001b, no page numbers)

After these processes of consultation and development, Statutory Instrument, No 1209 was laid before Parliament and came into force on 1 September 2001. The three-stage model of qualifications was embodied in this legislation. In relating the standards to a statutory requirement however, the language becomes even more specific.

"Stage 1 FE teaching qualification and stage 2 teaching qualification mean respectively introductory and intermediate stages of the stage 3 FE teaching qualification the standards for which are specified by the Secretary of State for the purpose of these regulations.

Stage 1 post and stage 2 post mean part-time teaching posts for which a stage 1 or stage 2 FE teaching qualification, as the case may be, is in the opinion of the institution which employs the teacher an appropriate qualification."

(DfEE, 2001, p.2)

The statutory instrument introduces its own system of internal logic. Notions of stage 1 and stage 2 qualifications linked to standards are defined by the Department that relate to different teaching roles, again defined by the Department. The issue of how these stages relate to the actual employment situations of part-time teachers by FE colleges is bypassed in the second quote that introduces a strong element of tautology and circularity into the equation. Stage 1 and stage 2 posts are those for which stage 1 or stage 2 qualifications are judged appropriate by the employer. In Chapter 3, I highlighted the huge diversity of part-time staff in FE and the range of their employment conditions. This complexity is reduced to just two types of teaching post, defined by a qualification deemed appropriate.

The regulation also defined to whom the regulation would be applicable i.e. new teachers in the FE sector not holding QTS and from when i.e. 1 September 2001. Although these points look innocuous, they proved to be very contentious, both inside and outside the Department and were soon changed as a result of political pressures. In the 2001 regulation, the FE sector was defined narrowly, in terms of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. It meant FE Corporations employing FE teachers working within the confines of colleges i.e. not within other contexts such as teaching off-site in community or work-based settings. Somewhat paradoxically the regulation was published at the same time as the Department announced its strategy for Skills for Life (DfEE, 2001), tackling the endemic UK problem of poor adult basic skills. Building on the findings of an influential national inquiry (Moser, 1999), DfEE recognized the need for a huge expansion in qualified teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. It also recognized the desirability of reaching out and teaching adults with poor basic skills in community settings, outside the confines of FE, as defined by the 2001 regulation. Providers of teacher-education programmes were also concerned about the very narrow definition of FE contained in the statutory instrument because it was seen as too restrictive a definition of teaching, given the wide range of trainees that were drawn to their courses. Given these pressures, in 2002 DfES widened the contexts for teaching practice to include:

- FE (as defined by the 1992 FHE Act)
- FE in HE settings
- Adult and community education and
- Literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision within FE and adult education.

By 2003 a powerful new unit within the Department, the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (DfES, 2003a) charged with implementing the *Skills for Life Strategy* was putting internal pressure on the ITT policy team to widen the context still further to include work-based learning and so this too was added. Also, as I described in Chapter 2, by 2003, the post-16 Standards unit had been established and the requirement to gain a teaching qualification was

extended to include both new and existing staff. Thus within two years, the scope of the original regulation and the groups of teachers to whom the standards were applicable had been completely altered. In his analysis of semiotic mediation, Wertsch makes the points that in their evolution the purposes of cultural tools constantly changes (Wertsch, 1985). The original FENTO standards were not designed as a regulation or to fit the SfL strategy. Within 4 years of their publication, however, these were precisely the purposes to which they were being adapted. This illustrates that as semiotic artefacts, the standards were manipulated, altered, used, discarded, and recycled, for different purpose and in different contexts as they passed through time (Hodder, 1996).

6.3 Standards, Endorsement and Qualification Requirements

As well as relating standards to qualifications, DfES also introduced new requirements for endorsement and inspection. From September 2001 all courses leading to an FE teaching qualification, whether awarded by an HEI or NAB were required to receive endorsement by FENTO. A second statutory instrument (2001b) gave OFSTED responsibility for the inspection of ITT (FE) courses leading to FENTO-endorsed teaching qualifications. In addition to these requirements where qualifications were awarded by a NAB, such as City & Guilds, approval was needed from QCA about where the qualification fitted, at what level within the National Qualification Framework. For HE qualifications, issues of level and structure were based upon the validation rules of the awarding university.

Endorsement

The 2000 DfEE consultation and the 2001 Statutory Requirement introduced the process of endorsement. FENTO (and later SVUK) identified its purpose as *to ensure that all qualifications are based on the FENTO standards for teaching and supporting learning and that they are quality assured* (p1, SVUK, 2005a). The focus was on how comprehensively qualifications provided what FENTO described as 'coverage' of the standards. This approach of treating

the standards as the content on which qualifications should be based was in marked contrast to the more prevalent NVQ approach where occupational standards were treated as occupational outcomes linked to assessment. Treating standards as a guide to content rather than outcomes reflects yet another subtle change in meaning.

> "The mapping document asks institutions to map the coverage of their qualifications (rather than their assessment) to the standards thus allowing institutions the freedom to decide which standards from units and modules are to be assessed."
>
> (SVUK, 2005b, p.7)

Indeed FENTO and later SVUK cautioned against an assessment-driven approach.

> "Some course design teams have tried to produce assessment-led qualifications where all the standards are assessed and these become the prime driver of the student experience. This should not be the case with SVUK-endorsed qualifications."
>
> (SVUK, 2005b, p.8)

All awarding bodies were required to complete a detailed grid, 'mapping' the component elements of their qualifications to the standards and to provide supplementary information on how they would develop and assure the quality of their programmes. The question of endorsing the QA procedures of HEIs and NABs was inherently complex given that HEI-based partnerships varied in size and geographical coverage from very large ones like the University of Huddersfield with over 35 colleges across a large region to others based upon universities acting as validating agencies for one or two colleges in their immediate locality. (OFSTED, 2003)

FENTO was placed in the almost impossible position of having to endorse over 50 HEI and NAB qualifications in the year following the 2001 statutory requirement. Interviews with former FENTO officers indicate that this was a frenetic period when FENTO, still an embryonic organization, struggled to

create and make sense of how to use standards to frame qualifications in a new regulatory environment.

> "We do have to remind ourselves that we have developed this internal language which is our language that we use to keep ourselves sane, like having endorsement, approval and the minimum core."
>
> **Senior SVUK, formerly FENTO Officer**

Neither the standards, nor the 2001 regulation provided clear demarcation lines about how to build qualifications based around the stage 1, 2 and 3 distinctions. In yet another shift, FENTO related the 3 stages to requirement for hours of teaching: a trainee on a stage 1 qualification would need 20 hours of teaching within one of the contexts, defined by DfES, a trainee on stage 2 would need 60 hours and a trainee on stage 3 would require 120 hours. Thus what had started as an attempt by DfES to define different employment roles in FE and to relate them to the standards, had actually evolved into a system of qualifications based upon how many hours trainees were teaching. For those designing qualifications, the fluidity of the emerging regulatory environment proved frustrating as these extracts from my interview with an officer from a leading NAB illustrate.

> "If I was being cruel, I would say they were making it up as they went along, but they were learning what they wanted through the process of discussing with us, with universities and other awarding bodies. It was a very frustrating experience and this was live.
>
> I think that one of the frustrations in 2001 was I don't think FENTO understood what it wanted ...I don't think, from a diametrically opposed view that HEIs understood what FENTO wanted and I don't think QCA understood any of it."
>
> **Senior Officer – City & Guilds**

Additional qualification requirements

The mention of QCA in the extracts above raises the issue of another aspect of regulation that is fundamental to how standards are mediated. The role of QCA is to regulate awarding bodies, accrediting and monitoring qualifications outside higher education. As is typical of standards generally, the FENTO (also the LLUK) standards were not defined in terms of academic levels. Throughout 2001-02, there was uncertainty about what academic level the different stages of the ITT qualification should be set. The existing City & Guilds 7307 teaching certificate had been developed as a level 3 access route into teaching. An officer from City & Guilds defined its role in the following terms.

> "The old 7307 teaching certificate was a 'transitional course for craftsmen wanting to move into teaching'. The 7407 Teaching Certificate (i.e. the one that was developed to include the FENTO standards at Level 4) is more academically demanding. It may no longer serve the original purpose of providing an entry route into FE teaching."
>
> **Senior Officer – City & Guilds**

Within DfES and FENTO, there was uncertainty about what level ITT qualifications should be calibrated. DfES did not want to create insurmountable obstacles for trainees with craft backgrounds making the transition into FE teaching, by setting the requirement too high. At the same time, ITT qualifications within the universities were generally pitched at first degree level and the Department was concerned that ITT qualifications for FE teachers should be seen as comparable to those for schools. Eventually QCA decided in August 2001 that all ITT (FE) qualifications should be at level 4. This uncertainty during 2001-2002 placed qualification designers from within the NABs in a difficult position.

> "There was still debate until the August preceding the introduction of qualification in 2001-02 whether stage 1 was at level 3 or level 4. That held up QCA accreditation. We were then in a period which lasted for

almost a year, what they (FENTO) would endorse and what their expectations were.

You think of pilots as being, things that run parallel to the old mainstream provision and we are not in that situation ...it is a pilot where everybody is thrown in and having to cope."

Senior Officer – City & Guilds

FENTO's decision to endorse qualifications on their coverage of the standards was significantly different from the dominant NVQ approach to which NABs were accustomed. City & Guilds had a long-standing tradition of providing craft and NVQ qualifications where the curriculum was structured around a set of outcomes designed to be assessed in the workplace.

"Our tradition is saying – let's decide what we are meant to be able to do at the end, let's look at appropriate assessment methods for that, end of story and the difference was that FENTO were very interested in input."

Senior Officer – City & Guilds

City & Guilds were keen to maintain the support of work-based providers who were strongly entrenched in the NVQ tradition. Indeed, as the C & G officer recounted, "an army trainer had said that the 7407 was 'a bit pink and fluffy' in comparison with the more 'down-to-earth' 7307." Following QCA accreditation, City & Guilds went ahead with running a new teaching qualification based on the standards from September 2001, but FENTO endorsement was not granted until June 2002. FENTO saw giving City & Guilds endorsement as a national precedent. It would be the first NAB to run a Level 4 teacher-training qualification. As well as having to prove level 'four ness', City & Guilds was required to base its ITT qualifications on a credit framework, so that each award was broken down into a set of discrete units linked to specific standards. This had the effect of fragmenting yet further the ITT curriculum. I will expand on this in Chapter 7 when I consider how teacher educators and trainees on these courses perceived the assessment of standards on these unit-based programmes.

FENTO was more permissive with HEIs. Between September 2001 and June 2003, it approved endorsement applications from 51 HEIs (OFSTED, 2003b). However, as the 2003 HMI survey demonstrated, the standards did not result in common interpretations of the learning experiences or the levels of achievements expected of trainees gaining these qualifications. Despite the plethora of standards and stages, there was not common practice about academic level or assessment. For example, the qualifications required on entry varied widely from one HEI to another, the number of observed teaching practices and their assessment varied and the level of final qualification also varied. The starkest example was of an HEI that awarded PGCE qualifications to all students whether or not they were graduates. Drawing upon a sample that included 8 HEIs and 23 colleges, HMI commented on the general confusion amongst both teacher educators and trainees about what the standards meant:

> "Overall, trainees are generally aware that they have to meet the standards but do not know clearly at what level they need to achieve them. This uncertainty is shared by many tutors, at least in respect of some of the standards. Current qualifications generally lack definitions or explanations of what constitutes an acceptable level for achievement of the relevant standards."
>
> (OFSTED 2003, p.25)

In response to the HMI report, FENTO started to change its approach (FENTO, 2002b). With schools-based ITT, the QTS framework of standards includes both statements of what capabilities trainees should demonstrate and what providers must include in the curriculum offer for trainees (TDA, 2007; Teacher Training Agency, 2002). For example, there is a stipulation that all pre-service trainees must have teaching placements in at least two schools and teach at two key stages. By 2003, FENTO was adding basic requirements as a condition of endorsement, for example that trainees on Cert. Ed/PGCE qualifications should have at least 6 supervised teaching sessions. Also in the wake of Dearing Report (1996) and the subsequent introduction of the *Curriculum 2000* reforms, DfES was keen that the

qualification requirement should specify the levels of skills that trainees should acquire in literacy, numeracy and ICT. FENTO responded by defining a minimum core based upon trainees demonstrating these key skills (FENTO, 2004; FENTO and NRDC, 2004). In effect therefore, the standards served as a fairly elastic tool subject to constant reinterpretation. Further additions were made as they were adapted for the purposes of endorsement and conversion into qualifications.

6.4 Standards in an inspection framework

After 2001, another regulatory agency, OFSTED emerged which until then had had little contact with the world of post-compulsory teacher education (2001b). Before then, ITT courses for the PCET sector had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) as part of its wider brief for the external evaluation of HE programmes. Although QAA reports are available for almost all the HEIs that offer post-compulsory ITT qualifications, they are based on the wider programme area of education, of which FETT is normally just a small component. A careful reading of QAA reports does little to inform the reader about the detail of FETT courses.

Given the 2001 statutory instruments, DfES were keen for OFSTED to immediately commence a cycle of inspections of ITT partnerships from 2002-03. Since its formation in 1993, OFSTED had conducted regular inspections of HEI-based ITT for schools teachers and DfES was keen on a comparable system for FE teacher-education. Given the newness of the legislation and the lack of basic data on ITT in the PCET sector, HMI decided to delay the commencement of an institutional inspection cycle and instead persuaded Departmental officials of the wisdom of a survey inspection to provide a system-wide view of FETT[24]. I have commented on aspects of this survey, elsewhere in this thesis. So here, I will continue to focus upon how the FENTO standards underwent yet further metamorphosis as they were mediated by HMI.

[24] As the HMI responsible for FETT, I was instrumental in persuading DfES to take this approach.

For the 2002-03 HMI survey a methodology for evaluating ITT courses was developed partly upon the schools ITT model (Teacher Training Agency, 2002) that was to eventually evolve into the Inspection Framework (OFSTED, 2004a) for evaluating FETT courses. It had three main elements:

1. *Standards achieved by trainees*
2. *Training quality*
3. *Management and quality assurance.*

The three elements are amplified in Figure 22. The titles and content of the first set of cells are based upon the 8 areas of teaching from the FENTO standards. The titles and content of the cells under training quality and management and quality assurance were similar to those used for schools ITT. Under the legislation, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has a statutory duty to advise the Secretary of State about standards of teacher training across schools and FE. Building some elements of commonality between the schools and FE Inspection frameworks would allow comparison between ITT for FE and secondary teachers.

1. MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE		
1a Procedures for selecting trainees	1b Management of training programme and partnership including the adequacy and effectiveness of resource deployment	1c Quality assurance procedures and improvement planning
2. QUALITY OF TRAINING		
2a Course content and structure	2b Determining and meeting trainees' needs	
2c Quality of training activities (including partnership arrangements)	2d Assessment of trainees	
3. STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY TRAINEES(FENTO)		
3a Assessing learners' needs	3c Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques	3e Providing learners with support
3b Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals	3d Managing the learning process	3f Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements
3g Reflecting and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice		
3h Meeting professional requirements – professional values and practice		

Figure 22 – Inspection Framework (p.11, OFSTED, 2003)

This model used for the survey placed the FENTO standards into a wider curriculum context, where what trainees actually achieved was related by inspectors to how they were taught, assessed, recruited and managed. Rather than just focussing upon the standards as end points, HMI sought to unravel the relationships between processes of teaching, learning and achievement. One aim of the survey was to evaluate whether the FENTO standards were appropriate in setting requirements for newly qualified teachers in FE. Its overall conclusion was damming:

> "The outcomes of the survey demonstrate clearly, however, that the standards are not an appropriate tool for designing initial teacher training courses or for judging the final attainment of newly qualified FE teachers. There are too many sub-standards for trainees to cope with, so that it is hard to focus on those that are really vital in initial development. The standards take insufficient account of the differing experiences and contexts of those teaching in FE, the demands on FE teachers of teaching students aged 14-16, and the increasing convergence of the 14-19 curriculum across schools and FE. Moreover, the FENTO standards are designed for staff teaching in FE colleges while many colleges and HEIs are using them for trainers from the wider post-compulsory sector."
>
> (OFSTED 2003, p.36)

In reaching this conclusion, HMI drew on comparative practice from 8 HEI and 3 NAB based qualifications. The ways in which standards had been incorporated into teaching programmes and assessment varied enormously; with some HEIs and City & Guilds attempting to use them as outcomes for assessing trainees' performance in assignments and teaching practice and others using them to map the content of the taught modules. As part of the survey, inspectors interviewed 120 trainees to assess their interpretations of the standards and observed them teaching to gain a view of their attainments. In pulling this evidence together, the report commented:

> "For their part, most trainees, though familiar with the standards, find some of the language remote, seldom use the standards to measure increases in their knowledge and skills, and are uncertain about the amount of evidence needed to prove that particular standards have been achieved."
>
> (OFSTED, 2003, p.36)

In Chapter 3, I briefly outlined Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development – the additional learning a subject derives from using a cultural artefact, sometimes under the guidance of a more experienced person, a teacher or mentor. The conclusion above, from the survey, that trainees, usually experienced FE teachers themselves, could not see the relationship between standards and an increase in their own knowledge and skills is salutary. If the specification of standards leads neither to commonality of

meaning, nor expands the understanding of those for whom they are designed, one is left with asking, what purpose do they serve?

As I explained in Chapter 2 these damming conclusions were immediately accepted by DfES. It announced an immediate round of further reforms (DfES, 2003c) which eventually culminated in the 2006 LLUK standards. In the meantime, however, the FENTO standards remained the basis for statutory regulation and OFSTED committed itself to commencing a round of institutional inspections from 2004 that had to take note of the FENTO standards. Between 2003 and 2004, OFSTED consulted about introducing FETT inspections closely modelled on the survey methodology (OFSTED, 2003a) and in 2004 commenced institutional inspections based upon a new framework and handbook (OFSTED, 2004a; OFSTED, 2004b). In these documents, the concept of trainees' progress and achievements replaces that of the FENTO standards altogether, as the long extract below from the 2004 Inspection Handbook indicates. HMI have turned the standards into guidelines for inspectors to arrive at a judgment about trainees' skills and progress against broad headings. In so doing, they have side stepped the detail of FENTO's sub and sub-sub standards. In effect, the standards have become the basis for one community of practice i.e. inspectors using a common language to guide their interpretation of the complexities of trainees' performance.

"By the end of their training programmes:

Q1 Do trainees reach a satisfactory level of teaching competence against the main elements specified in the national qualification requirements?

Q2 Have trainees made sufficient progress in their teaching capability in relation to their prior attainment and experience?

To answer each of these questions, inspectors will consider the following key areas of performance, taking into account the aims and objectives of the qualification for which trainees are enrolled. These areas incorporate the skills set out in the FENTO standards:

- *Professional values and practice* – Trainees are committed to raising students' achievement and demonstrate appropriate values and attitudes in their teaching and support of learning.
- *Self-evaluation and professional development* – Trainees are able to improve their own teaching by effective evaluation, and have the motivation and ability to develop professionally.
- *Knowledge and understanding* – Trainees have sufficient command of their subjects or vocational areas, and the associated pedagogical knowledge required to teach them effectively in the FE context.
- *Planning* – Trainees' planning demonstrates clear teaching objectives and learning targets, based on high expectations for all their students.
- *Teaching and learning strategies* – Trainees are able to use effectively a range of teaching strategies and resources, including ICT, that enable all their students to acquire the expected knowledge, understanding and skills.
- *Organisation and management* – Trainees are able to organise and manage their classes confidently and safely.
- *Monitoring and assessment* – Trainees are able to devise and use appropriate methods for monitoring and assessing their students' progress, to inform their own planning and stimulate their students to improve.
- *Access and support* – Trainees ensure that all students have full access to programmes of study and give suitable support to help them make good progress.

(OFSTED, 2004a, p.21 and 22)

By the time the standards had been re-interpreted for the purposes of institutional inspection, they had shifted a long way from the original formulation described in Chapter 5. Inspectors were now using them as a guide to make a professional judgement about trainees' progress and achievements and using 8 main headings, rather than focussing upon 300 standards. As far as teacher educators were concerned, they had been faced with many manifestations of the standards: the original holistic version; the three-stage regulatory model from the 2001 Statutory Requirement; the adaptations made by FENTO for endorsement purposes, where the 3 stages were linked to hours of teaching; then finally the OFSTED Inspection Handbook, where concepts of trainees' achievements and progress had replaced standards.

6.5 The 2007 Statutory Requirement and LLUK guidance

As I was nearing completion of my thesis, a new statutory instrument replaced the 2001 qualification requirement. Insufficient time has elapsed to consider how the new statutory instrument and LLUK standards will be mediated as they bed down into qualifications. So in this final section of the chapter, I will briefly compare and contrast the 2001 and 2007 regulatory frameworks by examining the text of the 2 statutory instruments (2001a; 2007a) and LLUK guidance about teaching roles, the new qualifications and the process of endorsement (LLUK, 2007c; LLUK, 2007d).

There are many parallels between the ways in which the standards have been mediated. As with FENTO, the LLUK standards are related in the 2007 legislation into 3 qualification stages based on the standards: PTTLS – preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector; CTTLS – Certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector and DTTLS – Diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector. The second and third stage qualifications are linked to new definitions of teacher status – the CETTL to Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) and the DTTL to QTLS, the full professional status, seen as comparable to QTS for school teachers. There are some parallels with the 2001 legislation. An attempt is made to reduce the diversity of teaching contexts across PCET to just 2 teaching roles, an associate and a full teaching role. Also, the statutory requirement only directly applies to FE teachers, although guidance from DIUS indicates that teachers in other LSC-funded contexts will be expected to gain these qualifications. Regulation outside FE, however will be dependent upon making the gaining of qualifications a condition of LSC funding. A final parallel is that as far as NABs are concerned the new qualifications have to meet QCA criteria for qualifications: levels and notions of credit. Despite these parallels, the specification by LLUK of a qualification framework and especially their translation of standards into assessment units that I described in Chapter 5, herald a much more intense regulatory framework.

The distinction between the full and associate teaching role is pivotal to the 2007 regulation and how the LLUK standards are translated into assessment outcomes linked to the new qualifications.

> "Associate teaching role means a teaching role that carries significantly less than the full teaching responsibilities ordinarily carried out in a full-time teaching role (whether on a full-time, part-time, fixed-term or agency basis) and does not require the teacher to demonstrate an extensive range of knowledge, understanding and application of curriculum development, curriculum innovation or curriculum delivery strategies.
>
> Full teaching role means a teaching role that carries the full range of teaching responsibilities (whether on a full-time, part-time, fixed-term or agency basis) and requires the teacher to demonstrate an extensive range of knowledge, understanding and application of curriculum development, curriculum innovation or curriculum delivery strategies."
>
> (DIUS, 2007, p.1)

These descriptions are not very illuminating for employers having to decide how to categorise their teachers in order to meet the 2007 requirement. Although they claim that the associate role carries 'significantly less responsibility' than the full teaching role, the exact nature of the full responsibility is not clearly defined in the legislation. The very general terms: curriculum development, curriculum innovation and curriculum delivery above do not convey any more precise meaning than the standards as a whole. The LLUK guidance published concurrently with the legislation provides more detail, but it is still ambiguous. It introduces an important change from the 2001 requirement in that the distinction between teaching roles is no longer based on the amount of time that someone teaches:

> "From September 2007 it is no longer the amount of time that someone teaches that determines which initial teaching qualification(s) should be undertaken, but their role as a teacher. All those who teach, even on a very part time basis, will be required to undertake a teaching qualification appropriate for either an associate teacher role or for a full teacher role."
>
> (LLUK, 2007c, p10)

The same LLUK guidance then goes on to refer to LLUK research that relates what teachers do to a 'teaching cycle' (Ibid, p.11) consisting of 6 phases:

- initial assessment
- preparation and planning
- delivery
- assessment
- evaluation
- revision based on evaluation.

It states that those in associate teaching roles have significantly, fewer responsibilities in relation to these activities. In perhaps the most illuminating extract, the LLUK goes onto make the following comment.

> "The research into teacher roles undertaken by LLUK identified that there were a range of people involved in teaching who did not develop their own materials, but taught from prepared packs. These teachers often had job titles such as instructor, trainer, technician, although this was not standard across constituencies. It was generally the case that where teachers fell into this category, there would be someone in a full teacher role who was working in association with them. The teacher in a full role would be acting as, for example, a line manager or mentor to advise on ways to ensure a positive learner experience. Where a teacher is not generally involved in the development of materials or learning programmes, they are unlikely to be considered to be in a full teacher role. However, it will be the combinations of different aspects of role which will define whether someone is working in an associate or full teacher role."
>
> (p12, LLUK, 2007c)

The claim above that the distinction between the 2 roles is founded upon research is hard to assess as LLUK has not published the research[25] on which this critical distinction is based. The statement above that associate teachers are not generally involved in the development of materials or learning programmes is hard to apply in practice. Many FE teachers work with

[25] In interviews with LLUK and SVUK officers, I attempted to ascertain what the status of this research was and where it could be located. At UCET meetings, similar attempt were made by UCET officers to ascertain the provenance of this research.

pre-prepared teaching materials for parts of their courses, but adapt them for the purposes of teaching and assessing specific topics. It may be impossible to define where the dividing line should be between development and working from pre-prepared packs. The real issue here is that in reducing teaching and learning to compartmentalised functions, LLUK have rendered the pedagogic act invisible. Teaching has been defined in purely empirical terms as a series of visible processes rather than a mediating activity involving teachers and learners utilising different cultural tools in particular contexts to expand their mutual understanding. Edwards, whose work I drew upon in Chapter 3, is critical of what she sees as this crude form of empiricism and advocates recognising the importance of both the teacher and learner as creative agents. Drawing on Vygotsky she presents a more interpretative view of pedagogy:

> "The task of teaching, at least in its most realised form... becomes one of enabling student participation in disciplinary genres and managing the intersection between content and pedagogy in pedagogic acts... In lay versions of teaching, pupils are seen as consumers of lessons that teachers simply prepare and deliver. We need to make the complexity of teaching explicit."
>
> (Edwards, 2001, p165)

The LLUK guidance goes on to list in detail the different responsibilities of associate and full teachers, in effect creating yet another set of standards to supplement the overarching standards and the assessment units, described in Chapter 5. Very mechanistic distinctions are made between the associate and full teaching roles as the next extract illustrates. The first three responsibilities are identical for associate and full teachers. Responsibilities numbered 5 to 8 are those which demarcate the full teaching role. A discourse is set up based on an erroneous premise that an associate teacher can plan teaching sessions without having to consider schemes of work (4), their coherence and appropriateness for learners (5), differentiation (6), planning for contingencies (7) or demonstrating planning skills (8). The associate teacher becomes a lesser mortal, who is somehow not aware of these critical dimensions. The Vygotskian notion of pedagogy is completely lost. Teaching is reduced to a list

of functions and responsibilities and a false division is created where some types of teaching can be compressed to fit 3 out of 8 inter-related categories.

Plan for learning and develop the curriculum

The teacher performing the associate teacher role will have responsibility to:	The teacher performing the full teacher role will have responsibility to:
Plan for learning and develop the curriculum	
1. Prepare session plans to meet the individual needs of learners, even if using pre-prepared materials and within predictable contexts 2. Plan teaching sessions 3. Will contribute to planning learning within a team, as appropriate	1. Prepare session plans to meet the individual needs of learners, even if using pre-prepared materials and within predictable contexts 2. Plan teaching sessions 3. Will contribute to planning learning within a team, as appropriate 4. Prepare schemes of work to meet the individual needs of learners 5. Develop learning programmes which are coherent and appropriate for learners 6. Plan differentiated learning activities which create the opportunity for individual learners to be assessed against measurable outcomes 7. Plan for contingencies within a teaching session 8. Demonstrate planning skills, both as an autonomous teacher and as an effective curriculum team member

(LLUK, 2007c, p.13)

In my later interviews with officials from SVUK, City & Guilds and curriculum managers from my 2 case-study colleges, I attempted to tease out their perception of the differences between these two teacher roles. A senior officer from City & Guilds was very concerned about how the distinction would work in practice:

> "We are moving from a system, based on the FENTO standards where the stages of the qualification are based largely on the hours you teach, to one which defines the qualification that you need, largely by role ... it is by no means clear, how these will articulate, this is a big change for the sector." **(Senior Officer – City & Guilds)**

The same officer interviewed very shortly before the reforms were due to be implemented was concerned about what would happen once they were interpreted by college managers and teachers.

> "If you are the college manager having to work out this amongst thousands of other things or you are just the teacher having to deal with this, it looks like an appalling mess and I think that it is still."
>
> **(Senior Officer – City & Guilds)**

Those writing from a trade union perspective argue that a distinction drawn from the world of training i.e. the notion of an instructor teaching from a training manual has been inappropriately incorporated into the 2007 regulation. In attempting to design standards for a completely diffuse sector, policy makers may have conflated quite distinct education and training traditions.

> "We are worried about the use of the associate teacher. This new concept seems to have come from the armed forces and some work-based learning providers and covers those using pre-prepared materials with learners. UCU does not want such staff to dilute professionalism and quality."
>
> **(Sally Hunt, University and College Union, Guardian, 2007)**

Curriculum managers from the two colleges that I selected for my research reinforced the concerns expressed above. The senior manager responsible for ITT and staff development, at the inner-city college, argued that all teachers within the college, whether full-time or part-time, would be regarded as playing the full teaching role because in teaching situations they would be seen as responsible for all aspects of students' learning and support. In the provincial college, I attended meetings of teacher-educators designing revised ITT qualifications in response to the LLUK guidance. They considered examples of actual teachers to test the distinction between the full and associate roles. One example was of part-time sports instructors who they initially thought would fit the associate definition because they work from

coaching manuals. However, when they explored in depth what their instructors did with students they found a whole host of interactions that seemed more representative of the full teacher role. For example, the sports instructors often drew upon their knowledge of sports sciences to make the students aware of the importance of the application of biological concepts to the performance of athletes. They concluded that even this part-time group would not fit the narrow LLUK definition of the associate teaching role.

Like the FENTO standards, the LLUK standards have also been translated into frameworks that take into account definitions of academic level and credit. In this respect, LLUK's development of new ITT qualifications has collided with yet another government agenda; that of rationalising the cumbersome system of overlapping vocational qualifications. Linked to the publication of the Leitch Report (2006), Ministers announced the Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (VQRP), which has the aim of rationalising the cumbersome system of competing vocational qualifications. QCA (2006) is piloting its new Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF), as part of this broader programme of vocational reform. The aim is to have a common framework of credit accumulation and transfer in place that will be applicable to all vocational awards by 2010. The new ITT qualifications accord with the QCF definitions of credit, units and levels as part of a wider QCA pilot linked to the VQRP. The PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS awards are designed using common definitions of units and levels that are being piloted for QCF. The LLUK awards have been calibrated at levels 3, 4 and 5 which in the QCA pilot (QCA, 2006) are defined as follows:

QCF level	Summary
Level 3	Achievement at level 3 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to complete tasks and address problems that while well defined have a measure of complexity. It includes taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within limited parameters. It also reflects awareness of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.

Level 4	Achievement at level 4 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. It includes taking responsibility for overall courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work
Level 5	Achievement at level 5 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address broadly defined, complex problems. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.

(QCA, 2006, p.3 and 4)

It is important to point out here that the QCF has 8 levels (plus an entry level) with level 4 being seen as broadly equivalent to the first year of a degree. I should quickly add, however, that the QCF levels are based upon occupational concepts of level based on notions of the complexity of work tasks rather than upon academic criteria used by universities. In other words the legacy is from the occupational model associated with NVQs that I discussed in Chapter Three. This of course raises yet another critical issue. LLUK took the important decision to allow the PTTLS and CTTLS qualifications to be available at levels 3 or 4 and the DTTLS units to be calibrated at levels 4 and 5. Each award is based upon mandatory and optional units that incorporate assessment outcomes and are given a QCF level and QCF credit rating. For example in the LLUK guidance the structure of the Diploma award is summarised in the following terms.

Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
This will be taken by teachers in a full teacher role.
Title of the qualification
This diploma qualification must be at a minimum level 5.
Level Five Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
National awarding bodies are required to use this title. Higher Education Institutions can name their own qualifications, but are encouraged to adopt similar terminology, to enable trainee teachers and employers to identify appropriate qualifications. These qualifications may be developed at different levels but must be at a minimum of level 5 (QCF). For awarding body qualifications within the QCF, the level is detailed at the beginning of the title.
This qualification may be offered in a number of modes including pre-service, in-service, part time or full time. Part one units must be delivered before part two units. At least 50% of credit of this qualification must be achieved at the level of the qualification, although some credit at level 3 or level 4 may be transferred. (Please see information on credit accumulation and transfer agreement in the following section.)
Units of assessment
Part One
Mandatory units:
Level 4 **6** credits Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector
Level 4 **9** credits Planning and enabling learning
Level 4 **15** credits Enabling learning and assessment
Level 4 **15** credits Theories and principles for planning and enabling learning
Optional units:
To the value of **15** credits at a minimum of level 4
Part Two
Mandatory units:
Level 5 **15** credits Continuing personal and professional development
Level 5 **15** credits Curriculum design for inclusive practice
Level 5 **15** credits Wider professional practice
Optional units:
A minimum of **15** credits at level 5
Note: 50% of the credit of the qualification must be achieved at level 5.
Optional units are still under development and will include units relating to the audience and the environment in which teaching and learning takes place. They will also relate to specific teacher responsibilities.

Credit
This diploma has a credit value of 120.
Teaching Practice
There must be a minimum of 150 hours of teaching practice

(LLUK, 2007c, p.22)

Unlike the relatively permissive FENTO regime, the LLUK system is based on tight regulation. As the above extract illustrates, this is especially true for NABs which are required to use the LLUK titles for the awards and to use the units as components for their qualifications. Even HEIs, however are expected

to follow the assessment outcomes defined in the units of assessment. The tone of the guidance below illustrates the degree of regulation.

> National awarding bodies are required to use these titles. Higher Education Institutions can name their own qualifications, but are encouraged to adopt similar terminology, to enable trainee teachers and employers to identify appropriate qualifications.
>
> LLUK has developed units of assessment on which all awarding institutions must base their programmes for initial teacher training. All awarding institutions offering the new qualifications will develop programmes using the common mandatory units of assessment.
>
> (LLUK, 2007c, p.25)

As part of the research, I questioned a senior SVUK officer about the nature of the new qualification regime. She stressed the desirability of developing a qualification system for ITT based on transportable credits that would allow trainee teachers to move across different providers in the lifelong learning sector, during the course of their teaching careers. She stated that the situation for NABs was "business as usual because they have had to adapt their qualifications to the credit and unitised framework." She acknowledged, however that the degree of compliance required of HEIs is now much greater, "in terms of the way they organise their qualifications even design their programmes", but in a cautionary note added that "if you want to play this game you have to take on board these rules."

This view probably downplays the very great anxiety created both for HEIs and for NABs in adjusting their qualifications to the LLUK model in an extremely compressed timescale. The LLUK (2007b) interim guidance was published in January 2007. Given the long lead time required for the validation and marketing of new courses, this was remarkably tight. Indeed when I interviewed a leading LLUK Consultant, who had played a major role in developing the Diploma units, she was far less sanguine about the issues. She saw teacher educators in HE as confused by the QCA levels and outcomes linked to the LLUK assessment units:

"HEIs don't work with units, don't understand units and unless they have got some sort of FE or OCN (Open College Network) background they have not got a clue what to do with units...There needed to be a whole lot of ground work done by LLUK, I think, to enable people to comment sensibly. UCET hasn't been able to play a helpful, developmental role. The HEIs were asked to comment at a very late stage and they didn't know what they were looking at ...they just kind of objected to everything."

(LLUK Consultant)

Officers from City & Guilds were also deeply concerned about the timescale for having qualifications in place based on both new assessment outcomes and the QCF.

"We would normally give our centres 9 months to be preparing for the introduction of a new qualification .... It will be 9 weeks at the rate we are going."

Senior Officer – City & Guilds

6.6 Concluding comments

In tracing the complex processes by which both sets of standards have and are being mediated into different types of regulations, the importance of context appears critical. In retrospect the FENTO regime looks exceedingly permissive. Neither DfES officials, nor FENTO officers were confident about how to set up a regulatory structure and the standards were treated as broad areas to be covered in qualifications. In contrast, the LLUK position is very interventionist and regulatory. Standards have been mediated into a complex qualification framework broken down into prescriptive assessment outcomes that must be used by awarding bodies. What emerges with both sets of standards however, is a picture of how limited their value has been in designing qualifications: neither embodies an academic level. Both are remarkably general and nebulous and have had to be converted by others - civil servants and officials from regulatory agencies, into other cultural artefacts. The FENTO standards were fragmented into the fictitious notion of

3 types of teacher and the LLUK standards have been related to what appears as a spurious distinction between full and associate teaching roles. The story of the evolution of both sets of standards illustrates how quickly standards as a cultural tool undergo metamorphosis as regulatory agencies and agents adapt them for new purposes. In the course of the 5 years between 1999 and 2004, the FENTO standards were recycled into legislation, inspection and qualification frameworks and during that time treated as inputs, assessment outcomes and broad criteria for the making of inspection judgements. It is too soon to judge how the LLUK standards will be mediated, but there is no reason to doubt that they too will take on several new forms and functions as they are adapted for new purposes in new contexts.

CHAPTER 7 – STANDARDS IN THE FE WORKPLACE

"Standards exist as some sort of parallel universe disconnected from the everyday concerns of teacher educators in colleges". (Quote from a teacher educator from Provincial College)

7.1 Introduction

In this and the next chapter, my attention is upon the third transition that I identified in the research design – how standards function in the pedagogical domain of FE. I focus on the 'consumption' of standards (Wertsch, 1998) – how they are interpreted and transformed by those for whom they were ostensibly designed: teacher educators, trainees and college managers working in the very distinct and local contexts of two FE colleges. This represents a fundamental shift in emphasis. I move from the analysis of the production of standards in the policy sphere to a focus on how standards are mediated by different agents: managers, teacher educators and trainees within particular organizations. Instead of starting from the policy arena, I start from particular pedagogical spaces in two colleges and ask how the standards and regulations were mediated. I concentrate upon processes of learning to teach within the organizational context of two FE colleges and consider how the policy drivers of standards and regulations impact on this, if at all. My focus here is similar to that of research (Hodkinson, 2007) for the ESRC funded 'transforming learning cultures in FE project' that start with learning processes in distinct FE research sites and consider how policy and other macro-factors such as the labour market are mediated in these unique cultural settings

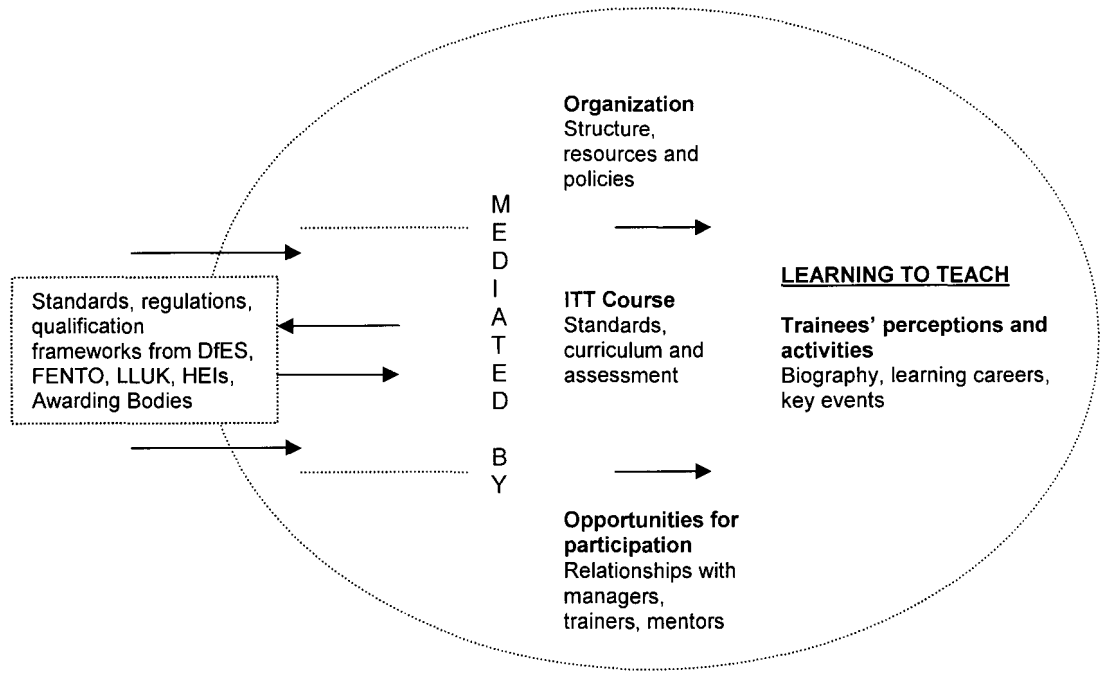


Figure 23: Mediation of standards - adjusted coding representation

In order to make sense of the complex pedagogical site that each college represented, I return to the coding analysis that I outlined in Chapter 4 (Figure 16). I have adjusted my coding representation to develop a more explanatory model of how standards and associated instruments are mediated in these complex domains. Earlier in the thesis, I referred to Cole's (1996) description of context as that which weaves together the actions of the individual with the social structure, rather than as something that simply 'surrounds' and is external. In Figure 23, I represent the contextual elements: the ITT course, the organization and participation as filters through which external standards and requirements are mediated. Trainees' perceptions and experiences of learning to teach, represented on the right, are mediated by all 3 of these filters. Different agents are instrumental in mediation. Teacher educators attempt the delicate balancing act of constructing workable courses that reflect the external artefacts of standards, regulations and qualifications and at the same time reflect affordances and constraints in the workplaces in which trainees learn and work. Largely outside the control of teacher educators is mediation within the wider organization of which ITT forms a small part. The quality of trainees' workplace learning, their opportunities to

gain professional experience of different areas of the FENTO standards, for example of student assessment and guidance, depend upon wider organizational factors. Their opportunities to engage in workplace practices are shaped by college hierarchies, the division of labour, the prevailing culture and the manner in which the organization conceives and creates opportunities for workplace learning. Trainees themselves play a key role given their unique dispositions, histories (Hodkinson, 2007) and learning territories (Fuller and Unwin, 2004).

In this chapter, I concentrate upon the organizational context. I compare and contrast the two colleges in order to evaluate how the mediation of standards was influenced by college policies, structures and resources and the implications this had for the ability of trainees to learn through participating in the learning environment each college represented. In the next chapter, I focus upon trainees' and teacher educators' experiences. How qualifications and curricula were constructed by teacher educators and experienced by trainees given the dual bind of externally-imposed standards and regulations and the realities of learning to teach in these complex workplaces. My analytical structure draws heavily on perspectives from theories of situated learning that I reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5, especially on Billet's representation (2002, 2004) of workplace pedagogy and Fuller and Unwin's (2004) characterisation of expansive learning environments. Billet highlights 3 factors: access to both formal and informal guidance; the opportunities for workers to participate in everyday work activities; and the ways in which organizations intentionally structure workplace activities to encourage learning and the adoption of practices that sustain the continuity of the workplace. In their research into the learning of apprentices, Fuller and Unwin also group the features of learning environments into 3 broad categories: access to off-the-job knowledge based qualifications; the way in which the organization links the acquisition of expertise to work and job design; and the opportunities for trainees to participate in multiple communities of practice. Their 3 categories resonated with the experiences of trainees learning to teach in my two colleges. In considering the nature of these two organizations, I also draw upon Engeström's (2001, 2004) emphasis upon how the overriding object of

the organization conditions the nature of learning, and influences the ways in which the boundary-crossing artefacts of standards and regulations are mediated.

7.2 The two colleges

I will start by providing brief descriptions of the 2 colleges based upon their prospectuses, staff handbooks, strategic plans, LSC data, FEFC and OFSTED inspection reports. I am not referencing these sources as they would immediately identify the 2 organizations.

The colleges

City College was established in 1990 and is located between one of the wealthiest and one of the poorest communities in England. Forty-five percent of the residents in the community, in which it is located, are from minority ethnic communities and according to the Local LSC, over 95% of students are identified as coming from economically deprived areas. The location of a massive financial centre within a mile of the main campus presents a striking contrast between the community from which students are drawn and the highly-paid workers who spend working days in gleaming high-rise offices. Provincial College by contrast is located in the largest town of a rural county. It was opened in 1957 and its predominantly white students are drawn from the county, with a smaller proportion from a neighbouring county. There are four colleges in the county including Provincial College, all located some distance away - over an hour by public transport. This has led it to offer a wide range of courses to meet the needs of local employers and community. In contrast there are several competing colleges within a 10-mile radius of City College.

Both colleges reflect the great diversity which is a predominant feature of FE. Each has several sites, at which courses for different communities are offered. Provincial College has an off-site training facility for training work-based trainees in engineering and construction and also runs part-time adult

education courses at many community venues across a large rural hinterland. It offers vocational and general courses from entry to Masters Level. About half of students are enrolled on HE courses that are validated by a university in the region. City College also has different sites across the local authority borough. It offers general educational and vocational courses and specialises in programmes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

The diversity of student groups is reflected in the organisational structures of the two institutions. In Provincial College, the management of HE and FE is completely separated with different senior managers and FE and HE faculties and departments. At the time of the fieldwork, plans were well advanced to create separate HE and FE campuses. In City College, there is also specialisation. Part of the organization is marketed as a separate Sixth-Form Centre for 14-19 students; another part as an Adult College. The main focus of the organisation is on offering its local community, good access to FE courses, from entry level through levels 1 to 3 of the National Qualification Framework. These organisational factors loomed large in the lives and learning of the trainees and other staff interviewed, as part of the fieldwork.

Given these contexts, each college contained several sub-groups of teachers. At the time of the fieldwork, City College had enrolled over 5,000 students, of which about 70 percent were over 19. Its curriculum offer was diverse spanning ten areas of learning from the sciences and humanities to business, ICT, art, design and media and a substantial specialisation in adult basic skills and ESOL. Provincial College had over 20.000 student enrolments which included substantial HE provision funded by HEFCE, a wide range of adult and community courses offered at 30 community venues and FE courses that spanned over 10 different areas of learning, and included traditional workshop subjects such as engineering, construction, hospitality and catering.

In each college, trainee teachers identified strongly with their teaching departments. These had very different traditions in terms of the qualifications and student groups – whether they specialised in work-related, general vocational or GCE/GCSE courses and in terms of the sections of the

community – adults or 14-19, skills for life or mainstream that they attracted. Both colleges illustrate what Robson (1998, p.44) describes:

> "The diversity in the backgrounds of FE teachers and in the nature of the work they undertake leads to the development of a number of quite distinctive cultures, often within one FE College ".

The departments in which trainees gained teaching experience reflected wider labour market and employment traditions for particular occupations. For example, in both colleges the departments of art and design employed a high proportion of part-time teachers. This reflected the employment practices of staff employed in visual and performing arts, who often build up portfolios of work, where teaching is combined with outside work. In contrast, in science departments, virtually all the teachers were full-time and there was a low turnover of staff. Teachers at both colleges were located in different staff rooms, according to which subject or occupational area they taught. In Provincial, they occupied different areas of the sites according to whether they belonged to HE, FE or work-based training, so that in addition to the divisions into departments by subject areas, there were discrete divisions based upon the level and types of qualifications.

7.3 ITT and standards within the wider organization

Organizational structure - location of ITT teams

The small teacher-educator teams, 2 teacher-educators at Provincial and 3 at City College were located in quite different parts of each organization. As Figure 24 illustrates, teacher educators at City were part of a central cross-college 'Quality and Development Unit' with a brief that encompassed staff development, ITT and quality assurance. The head of the unit also taught on City & Guilds ITT courses and had responsibility for staff induction, professional development and for conducting internal quality reviews of curriculum areas. He reported directly to the senior manager responsible for HR and was a participant in all formal meetings involving heads of teaching

departments and senior post holders. He was thus in a position to act as an ambassador for ITT and to link it to the quality of teaching in the departments.

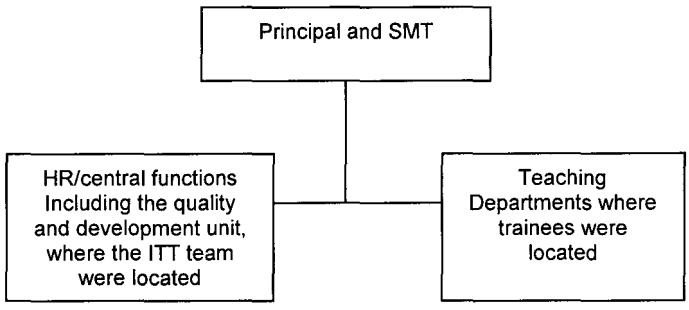


Figure 24: Location of ITT team within City College

He explained to me that the former principal had brought ITT, professional development and QA together as part of a concerted quality-improvement strategy. Having worked in 5 other FE colleges, he described City College as "the most CPD-nurturing, development-centred organization, I have ever worked." To illustrate this, he referred to the '*Teaching Practice Improvement Strategy*' whereby all permanent staff who successfully completed a teaching qualification or recognized IT training received an automatic salary increment.

In contrast within Provincial College, the ITT team were located in one department of an HE faculty where health, business and social science undergraduate and professional programmes were run. The two teacher educators reported to a head of department within the faculty who was responsible for a portfolio of business and social science programmes, of which ITT were a small part. As such the ITT team were well removed from the day-to-day functioning of the FE part of the college which they informed me 'sent' students to them, often with little prior notice, to take the Cert. Ed and PGCE courses. They had no formal links with FE heads of department that were part of the FE sub-structure or with the HR Department which devised organizational policies on staff induction, mentoring and initial teaching qualifications.

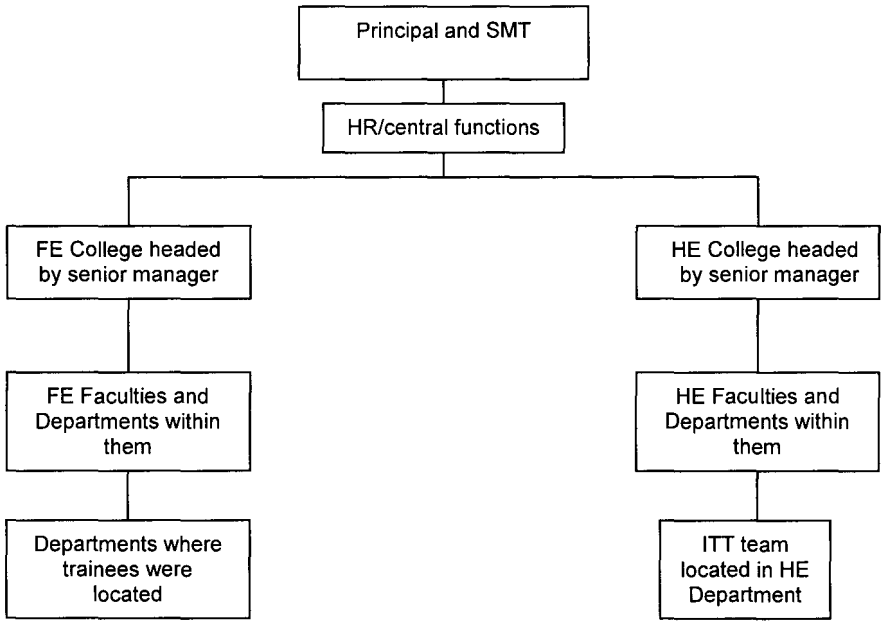


Figure 25: Location of ITT team within Provincial College

These contrasting locations raised critical issues for professional development in relation to the FENTO standards. In Provincial, the teacher educators had the status of a course team in a multi-disciplinary HE faculty. In City, ITT was seen as part of a wider organizational function linked to quality assurance and professional development. The FENTO (and LLUK) standards are premised on the idea of the trainee gaining experience of institute-wide processes, for example student guidance and quality assurance. On ITT courses, trainees' learning depends upon a combination of taught (off-the-job) and work-based (on-the-job) elements or on the organization deliberately structuring learning into workplace practices (Billet, 2004). In aligning ITT with wider organizational processes, City College integrated ITT and professional development into the organization. In contrast at Provincial College, staff responsible for ITT had a peripheral role away from the dynamic of FE.

Whilst the ITT team played a much more central role linked to professional development and QA at City, it would be misleading to suggest that all aspects of ITT and CPD were completely integrated. Away from the main site,

dedicated ITT courses for teachers of literacy and ESOL had developed in a community centre following a successful bid for external funding. Although some of these led to City & Guilds 7407 teaching qualifications, the course team, the curricula traditions, the assignments and the assessment were completely different from those of the generic ITT courses. There was little liaison between the cross-college unit responsible for the generic ITT programmes and the manager in charge of this dedicated ITT provision. The head of the Quality and Development Unit was very aware of this separation and drew me into discussions about future plans. A year after I completed my fieldwork, the ESOL ITT courses were integrated into the college unit.

Wider organizational policies and practices

An examination of the two colleges' policies on ITT and teaching qualifications and interviews with HR and other senior managers reinforced the view that City had a more integrated approach to developing its teachers. With the publication of the 2001 statutory instrument, both colleges had adapted their staff recruitment and training policies to comply with the legislation. Well before the introduction of the statutory requirement, however, City had implemented its own policy that all full-time and substantial part-time teachers had to gain an ITT qualification. By 2003 it had achieved the target (LSC, 2003b) of 90% full-time and 60% part-time staff to be qualified by 2006. The director of HR had been in charge of ITT courses, before being promoted to a senior management role and was very conversant with the ITT reform agenda. Full-time teachers were given half-a-day's remission and part-time teachers received payment for attending the City & Guilds course on a pro-rata basis. On appointment, all new teachers' qualifications were checked and arrangements to ensure that they received appropriate ITT and other forms of staff development were made with their curriculum managers. The HR director had a clear idea of City's priorities that were to ensure all part-time teachers gained a teaching qualification and to improve the training of those teaching on basic skills programmes, for which demand was mushrooming.

At the time of my fieldwork accurate data on the proportions of staff with teaching qualifications was not available for Provincial College. However, the HR director estimated that approximately 75% of full-time and 45% of part-time staff held a recognized teaching qualification. It had some way to go to achieve LSC targets. In response to the 2001 requirement, a new compliance policy was introduced that defined precisely the timescales by which full-time, proportionate and part-time staff had to achieve teaching qualifications and the steps managers should take if they did not. The policy was developed as a legal document by the director of HR and follows the 2001 statutory requirement very closely. Its tone and language reflect this legal orientation.

CONTRACTUAL POSITION

All permanent teaching staff appointed on or after 1 September 2001 will have a clause in their contract of employment requiring achievement of specified qualifications within a given time period.

Full-time Lecturers appointed after 1 September 2001

Successful completion of a Certificate of Education or PGCE within 2 years of commencing the relevant course of training. For the duration of the training three hours will be allocated across a balanced workload set against teaching.

Proportional Lecturers

Successful completion of a Certificate of Education or PGCE within 4 years of commencing of the relevant course of training. For the duration of the training pro rata to three hours will be allocated across a balanced workload set against teaching (minimum ½ hour).

Part-time contracted staff (Hourly paid)

All staff on hourly contracts teaching qualificatory programmes should successfully complete City and Guilds Stage 1 within 2 years and City and Guilds 7307 Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate within 4 years.

All hourly paid staff have the option to undertake a Certificate of Education or PGCE which should be successfully completed. Funding will be provided for 3 years following the award of Stage 2.

All of the above requirements will be supported by free entry to applicable internal courses. Courses must be attended and associated work undertaken in individual's own time.

Extract from Provincial College, Procedural Guidance Document on Compulsory Teaching Qualifications

Later in the document, procedures by which line managers should review the progress of staff undertaking qualifications as part of annual staff appraisal

are defined. Nowhere is any connection made between ITT and improving teachers' skills. The policy is presented as an external requirement requiring compliance, rather than as a desirable strategy by which to improve the quality of teaching and professional development. No identification is made between standards and the college's own aim of improving teaching. As in City, all full-time teachers were allocated remission of 3 hours from teaching and had their course fees paid. Part-time staff had their fees paid, but received no remission from teaching or payment to attend the ITT courses. When I interviewed the director of HR who had joined the college from a non-educational background, it became clear that there had been little liaison between HR and the teacher-education team. She was very candid about this as the extract below indicates.

"HR have had very little involvement at all with the issue of teacher training. We record it, we contract for it, but we don't manage that process and that is managed by the sectors, so it's managed by FE."

Director of HR at Provincial College

Senior FE managers that I interviewed acknowledged the separation and clearly regarded the role of teacher educators in the HE faculty as servicing the ITT needs of FE staff.

"I'm not sure of how much of a link there is between HR and the deliverers of the programme, the teacher education people. HR they do the stats and so on, they produce the policy, there is obviously some liaison, some discussing at the beginning of that, but I'm not quite sure how much there is of that."

Senior manager, Provincial College

As the above comment suggests, there was little integration between the 'deliverers' of the programme located in HE, the trainees who came from FE departments and HR that had drafted the policy for teacher qualifications. Over the period of my fieldwork, considerable internal conflicts became apparent between the FE and HE wings of the college that eventually led to a decision by FE managers to send all their in-service teachers onto a separate City & Guilds ITT programme for the academic year, 2006-07 whilst they

negotiated a new PGCE programme linked to the LLUK standards with their colleagues from HE. Senior managers of FE saw the PGCE course as too theoretical and of limited use in developing the 'practical' teaching skills of vocational teachers as the quote below illustrates.

> "I'm not sure that it's actually giving them the skills that they need to get in there in the classroom or workshop and deal with classroom behaviour, different styles of learning, different teaching techniques. I think there is a lot of academic stuff in there, and somebody was saying to me only yesterday 'I'm nearly at the end of it, I will have done 32,000 words' or something and I just think it is madness. And I said 'has it made you a better teacher? 'No I'm not sure it's taught me the skills that I actually need."
>
> **Senior manager, Provincial College**

In their characterisation of organizational learning environments on the expansive-restrictive continuum, Fuller and Unwin (2004) highlight the importance of the organization deliberately linking the acquisition of expertise to work organization and job design, for example by sharing knowledge across organizational boundaries. The 2 colleges were contrasting in this respect. City explicitly linked ITT to wider organizational processes, whilst at Provincial College there was little connection between HR, the FE section and the teacher-education teams. The need for staff to gain a teaching qualification was couched in narrow legalistic terms; as a problem that needed resolution. City comes across as a much more expansive learning environment. I need to qualify this picture a little by considering other influences within the organizations such as the different occupational cultures and employment patterns within the departments.

Resources and the wider object of the organization

Engeström argues that it is through uncovering the collective object of the organization that other facets of the workplace that influence learning such as power relationships and the division of labour are exposed (Engeström, 1999a; Engeström, 1999b; Engeström, 2001). From his perspective the collective object is seen as having a fundamental influence on processes of

learning and mediation. In Chapters 3 and 4, I reviewed studies of the impact of marketisation on FE colleges and the development of more managerial cultures in response to demands for greater public accountability (Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Gleeson, 2005; Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005). These studies perceive the growth of a more intrusive managerialism as a response to incorporation and point to its effect of undermining teacher professionalism and autonomy. Findings from the very recent 2004-2007 longitudinal research project on the impact of policy on the LSC sector in England (Spours, Coffield and Gregson, 2007), also stress the pervasive influence of external policy levers, particularly funding and related LSC controls, in shaping the behaviour of college managers. In this study, based on repeat visits by an experienced research team to 4 colleges and within them 22 departments or curriculum areas, it was found that:

> "Funding, linked to targets or not, remained a fundamental shaping influence on college behaviour. There were echoes of the FEFC era with middle managers continuing to see students as sources of funding".
>
> (Spours et. al, 2007, p.197)

In both City and Provincial College external policy drivers, especially those linked to funding targets, had a huge influence on the ways in which professional development based on ITT and the national standards were perceived by departmental managers. The overriding imperative was to recruit students and to provide staff to teach courses to meet funding targets. This message came across extremely strongly in interviews with managers, whose staff included in-service trainees. Departmental managers faced the conflicting demands of achieving LSC funding agreements, on which senior management were judging their performance, and providing professional support for unqualified teachers who they line managed. For those with curriculum areas with high turnovers of staff, there was a particular conflict between the statutory requirement for new staff to gain a qualification based on the standards and the need to staff courses to meet targets, as the next extract illustrates.

"Plumbing has been very popular and of course we had no plumbing lecturers and ... they tend to come straight out of the business. So we took on a number... who had never taught before... And the head of construction couldn't accommodate the PGCE in their timetable because of the demand for plumbing courses, but on top of that he was struggling to ensure he kept his plumbing teaching staff, because as soon as they started the teaching and saw the pressures of actually your first year of teaching which is enormous in terms of you are not only getting used to the idea, but the preparation and understanding all this jargon in the standards. He was having quite a lot of difficulty in making sure they didn't get overload and he genuinely didn't believe that putting them on the Cert Ed would have helped them at all, because they needed to keep focused on developing schemes of work and assessment strategies for the plumbing. So they were on the whole going through a year's teaching experience before they were to start."

"The rise in motor vehicle started in the late 70s. A lot of young staff were taken on then. There were staff in their late 30s, mid-40s that were already here and we've got the situation where we've had groups of staff leave in big chunks. We are now getting another chunk of staff leaving. We're getting a lot of new staff coming in that haven't got a teaching qualification. They've now got to meet the requirement. In fact we had a situation in September where we had 3 members of staff that were going through the process either the first or second year and we had to say to some - look no you're going to have to delay this for a year (because they get a 3 hour allowance) we can't afford to have any more staff lose time off their timetable because we're so crushed up now."

FE curriculum managers for construction and motor vehicles, Provincial College

The extracts above are interesting in that they indicate a clear conflict between the overriding object of the college to meet targets and staff courses and the statutory requirement for new teachers to take a teaching qualification. There is a further dimension in them however, in that curriculum managers actually saw gaining a teaching qualification as counter productive for new teachers from craft backgrounds who would be put off by jargon in the standards and the heavy demands of ITT. Curriculum managers stressed that their main concern was to retain new staff and complying with the statutory requirement was not their main priority. Whilst they were aware of the college's HR policy, they quoted many instances where they had encouraged new full-time teachers to delay teacher training, even though they would be in

breach of the regulation. When I put this to the senior manager in charge of FE, the following comment was made.

> "It is the elephant in the room. I know of no case law where colleges have acted to remove staff that have not complied with the 2001 statutory requirement."
>
> **Senior Curriculum Manager, Provincial College**

Although curriculum managers at City were far more positive about the value of ITT, similar tensions arose between supporting new staff and achieving LSC targets. This was particularly acute for departments such as creative arts that had a high staff turnover combined with a record of successful student recruitment and relied heavily on part-time teachers. In this case too, curriculum managers were delaying putting new teachers on the ITT qualification.

> "Creative Arts is very big, very successful ....programme area. I think in total I manage around 52 staff. I say around because some of them come in for just a couple of hours a week as visiting lecturers and I never meet them, apart from signing a contract. That in one respect is wonderful, and one respect is very difficult to manage as you can imagine. It's wonderful because it means we get industry specialists and people who are working in the cultural industries or are fine art practitioners, and we get their real experience in the classroom. It's difficult in the other respect in terms of teacher training and also just in terms of sheer management of that amount of staff.... But I am very concerned that because there are large numbers of part time teachers, obviously you know you pay someone because they are a silk screen specialist or you pay someone because they do digital computing or something.... There are so many part time tutors, a lot of them new and untrained, and they need help."
>
> **Curriculum Manager – City College**

As the example above shows, employment patterns and external funding pressures had a major bearing even at City which was a far more expansive learning environment. Within both colleges, there were contrasting curriculum areas and this had a major bearing on how the 2001 legislation linked to standards was mediated. During my fieldwork, I also investigated the science

departments at each college. Here there were low proportions of part-time teachers and all the full-time staff of both colleges were either already qualified or were undertaking an ITT qualification within the statutory time limit.

Opportunities for participation

The structuring of the training of employees at the start of their careers so that they have the opportunity to work across different specialisms and departments is a common practice in professions like medicine and law. Through participating in different communities of practice across the organization, the newcomer gains an overview of the different facets of professional work. In their research on the learning of apprentices in manufacturing companies, Fuller and Unwin (2004) found that companies, with a more expansive approach to learning, structured apprentices training so that gaining horizontal experience, across the organization became a routine part of their programme. Both official sources - the HMI surveys (OFSTED, 2003b; OFSTED, 2006) and Equipping our Teachers (DfES, 2004b; DfES, 2005) and the academic literature (Billett, 2002; Billett, 2004; Eraut, 2005a; Eraut et al., 2004; Wenger, 1998) highlight the importance of employees gaining access to different communities of practice in workplace learning and professional development.

> "How individuals participate and interact in workplaces is central to their learning...This participation includes the kinds of activities individuals are permitted to engage in and the kinds of support and guidance offered by the workplace."
>
> (Billet, 2004, p.110).

For the initial training of secondary teachers, there are national requirements (TDA, 2007; Teacher Training Agency, 2002) on HEI-school partnerships to ensure that trainees are given teaching practice placements in at least two schools and at two key stages. Such requirements have not been made

compulsory for FE trainees, even in the national reforms[26] (DfES, 2004a). However, in 2006 LLUK and DfES published criteria for ITT partnerships wishing to apply for CETT (Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training) status that highlighted the desirability of ITT providers of increasing the breadth and depth of trainees' experience by providing opportunities for observing, teaching or assessing different types of learners on different qualifications in more than one LSC context (DfES, 2006a). Both the FENTO and LLUK standards cover a broad sweep of professional areas, for example knowledge of systems of initial student assessment, learning support and course management. Given that many aspects of teachers' capabilities are developed through collaboration with more experienced colleagues at work, the professional areas that the standards represent cannot simply be covered through the taught elements of ITT courses; they have to be structured into the work-based elements of the training programme in ways that would be seen as routine in some professions.

Work-based mentors can play an invaluable role in unlocking different areas of the organization for newcomers and for this reason mentoring has become increasingly advocated in the context of school, FE teacher training and initial professional development in other occupations (Derrick and Dicks, 2005). Access to different communities of practice, for example different courses, functions and subject department in a college, is facilitated through experienced co-workers who know the ropes and can gain entry to areas of the organization that might prove impenetrable to newcomers. Without access to different areas of colleges, it is doubtful whether ITT trainees could gain knowledge and experience of the wide range of professional areas that are covered in the FENTO standards. In Vygotskian terms, mentoring has become associated with scaffolding approaches (Daniels, 2001) where the trainee is given support by an experienced role model in handling work-based tasks until they reach the stage where they can work independently. The more experienced peer guides the newcomer through organizational processes

[26] As part of my own professional involvement in policy making, I argued consistently in favour of creating a national legal requirement for teachers in the PCET sector to have an entitlement to gaining experience of different teaching, observation and assessment settings and co-authored the DfES/LLUK CETT guidelines.

until the newcomer gains sufficient knowledge, confidence and understanding to tackle them on their own.

Given that my focus in this chapter is on the organizational context of ITT, I will restrict my comments here to how the two colleges deliberately structured opportunities for learning at work so that trainees were able to gain experience through participating in a range of practices across the organization. I will expand my analysis of this facet in Chapter 8 when I explore trainees' reactions and experiences of mentoring and participation. The range of structured mentoring practice was immensely variable within each of the two colleges. Neither ensured that trainees gained an experience of different functions and features across the organization, except in the very minimalist sense that both had short induction programmes for new employees. The pre-service PGCE trainees at both colleges were allocated a mentor, but as I will discuss in the next chapter, the levels of support given to trainees varied immensely. None of the in-service trainees at either college was allocated a formal mentor. As far as gaining experience across the organization, in-service trainees were left to their own devices to learn about different functions and procedures. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 8, the part played by trainees as individual agents had a major influence on what they were able to learn. Some proved very adept in using their own initiative to do this, whilst others found that their locations within the organization and the nature of their employment contracts severely constrained their opportunities.

By far the most purposeful and integrated practice that I encountered was on the City & Guilds stage 1 ESOL ITT programme at City College. This was based upon 'the training class' model (Derrick and Dicks, 2005) that has a long tradition in language teaching. The course ran over 18 weeks, 14 of which included teaching experience. It had a total of 12 trainees on it who were divided into 2 groups of 6. Each group of 6 trainees practised their teaching skills for 2 hours each day with 2 groups of actual ESOL students at different qualification levels under the close supervision of a trainer. Often the trainer would start the session with some whole-group teaching and then the trainees would work individually with 3 or 4 students. What they were allowed

to teach was tightly structured into a progressive scheme of work that reflected the main teaching areas in the FENTO standards. For example, at the start of their teaching they carried out an initial assessment with students and towards the end they were all given an opportunity to plan and do some whole-class teaching. Half-way through the ITT programme the two groups of 6 trainees swapped their 'training class' i.e. the real classes of ESOL students that they were team teaching under the guidance of their trainer. At the end of each day, an hour was set aside for the group to review, with their peers and the trainer, what had been successful, what hadn't and why. In this system the role of the trainer and mentor are combined and trainees have the opportunity to observe each other and an advanced practitioner, under a tightly structured regime. The comprehensive mentoring practice here was related more to the ESOL tradition of language teaching than to a purposeful strategy devised by the college. However senior management had already identified it as a 'good', if resource-intensive model which the HR director said was on his agenda to "extend to other parts of the college."

The pre-service trainees on generic ITT courses could all be described as being apprentices, in the sense that they had been allocated an experienced teacher in their subject or occupational area. Even when their mentors spent time observing them and creating opportunities for them to participate in other professional activities across the colleges, the structuring of their professional development was far more random and dependent on the unique locations of each trainee in the college, as opposed to the 'training class' model above. Neither college had a system whereby mentors were integrated into the tutoring or assessment of the ITT programmes. At City the role of the PGCE mentors was partly determined by the college's agreement with the university that placed trainees at the college. The university's own guidelines for subject mentors were stated in a very permissive way, as illustrated by the next extract. The university was reluctant to prescribe a set model, given that it was heavily reliant on cooperation from FE colleges in its partnership.

It is important to recognize that, because of the diversity of individual colleges in the partnership, beginning teacher's experience of the course may vary in certain respects. For example, some colleges may be able to provide you with your own desk while in others you could have to share with several part-time tutors. Some mentors may have particularly time consuming commitments. Some may have demanding middle management responsibilities to fulfil alongside their contribution to the smooth running of the PGCE. Please be aware, and tolerant, of these possibilities.

Extracts from Student Handbook provided to PGCE trainees placed at City College

At Provincial, the teacher education team were equally reliant on good will from the host departments where trainees were placed. College mentors were asked but not compelled to attend mentor training run by the HE teacher-educator team. The flavour of the handbook provided to mentors is strikingly similar in tone to the example from City.

We are asking subject mentors on this programme:

- to support and encourage the student teacher's progress and development
- to discuss their own classroom practice with the student teacher and make clear the experiences on which it is based and the influences that have shaped it.

We would ask you to establish a regular meeting slot with your student teacher. We suggest that you meet fortnightly to review progress and plan collaborative teaching activities.

Extract from provincial college's subject mentor's handbook

Mentors are asked to provide support, but there is no organizational expectation that this will be available. The teacher-educators at Provincial saw themselves as powerless to influence mentoring practices in the college. The PGCE course leader perceived that there was "a reluctance on behalf of ... management to recognise that role, either financially or in time"...and commented further that "it is a mind set, in that maybe it's seen as helping out the PGCE, supporting students, rather than perhaps, something that training of new staff or new teachers is kind of important as an institution." Her comments reinforced the picture of Provincial College as an organization with a restrictive learning environment.

7.4 Concluding comments

In this chapter I have attempted to sketch the organizational backcloth against which trainees learnt to teach, in accordance with the regulations and standards. I have stressed that trainees' opportunities to develop teaching capabilities against the areas of the FENTO standards were heavily dependant on the deliberate structuring of their workplace practices (Billett, 2004; Fuller and Unwin, 2004). City comes across as a more expansive learning environment. The ITT team was integrated into central organizational processes and teachers were encouraged to undertake ITT and CPD, as part of wider organizational priorities. At Provincial, by contrast the ITT team lived on the margins of the organization and interpretation of the 2001 statutory requirement for teachers to gain a qualification based on the FENTO standards, was treated as a matter of compliance. In both organizations the managerial imperative to fulfil LSC funding targets shaped middle management behaviour and this caused tensions between supporting employees in undertaking professional development, particularly in departments which had a strong reliance on part-time staff. In neither college were participatory practices deliberately structured into the work-based learning of employees embarking on a new career in an unfamiliar domain. However, on ITT courses linked to ESOL, there was a more integrated and inclusive model of training which can be attributed to traditions in ESOL teaching rather than overall organizational policy. Having sketched features of the organizational contexts of these two colleges, I will now turn to data gathered primarily from interviewing trainees and teacher educators. I will consider how the external imperatives of standards and regulations were mediated further given their unique biographies and locations within each organization.

CHAPTER 8 STANDARDS AND LEARNING TO TEACH

"In using...representations, rituals, language and other cultural tools, individuals and groups always shape and transform these... in particular ways." (Wertsch,1998, p.146)

8.1 Introduction

From concentrating on the organizational contexts of the 2 colleges, I now turn to evaluating the experiences of trainees and teacher educators who worked and learnt there. I focus upon how standards were interpreted by them as they engaged in day-to-day activities such as designing courses, meeting co-workers and completing assignments. The data are presented using two broad questions based on the coding analysis:

- How were standards mediated into ITT courses at the two colleges?
- What influence did trainees' biographies, locations within the organization and opportunities for participation have on the mediation of standards?

The first question led me to analyse the curriculum content and assessment of the ITT courses that different groups of trainees were taking. The second question involved evaluating trainees' experiences of both the taught and work-based elements of ITT. Throughout the chapter, I explore how, if at all, standards enriched the process of learning to teach. Vygotsky saw mediating tools as having the potential to expand understanding to extend our Zones of Proximal Development (see p.89). I consider whether teacher educators and trainees used and saw standards as a useful tool which extended their learning or whether they merely acquiesced in them, given that they had little alternative but to construct or gain qualifications based on standards and regulations.

8.2 Standards and ITT courses

My sample of trainees included 4 groups: in and pre-service groups at both colleges. In-service trainees at City were taking the Stage 1 and Stage 2, City

& Guilds 7407 Certificates in FE teaching, until September 2007, the most common NAB qualifications. (OFSTED 2006) Trainees attended the course for 4 hours per week and were assessed on their assignments and observed teaching practice. Stage 1 lasted for 12 weeks and Stage 2, for a further 18 weeks. The pre-service trainees at City were all taking a PGCE qualification and were on placement at the college from a large university in the conurbation. In effect therefore the 3 teacher educators at City were teaching and/or assessing qualifications that had been designed by external bodies. In contrast at Provincial College both the in-service and pre-service trainees were taking Cert. Ed or PGCE qualifications that had been designed by teacher educators through a validation arrangement with a university in the region. The courses were representative of the three main ITT routes illustrated below.

Pre-service trainees or new teachers (in-service)			
Following a:	Full-time Pre-service course	Part-time In-service course	
Leading to:	Cert Ed or a PGCE	Cert Ed or a PGCE	FE Teaching Certificates such as City & Guilds 7407
Lasting normally for:	One year	Two years	One year
Normally, covering FENTO standards for stage/s:	1 to 3	1 to 3	1 and 2 (also available for stage 3)
At level:	At level 4 (or above) of the National Qualification Framework		At level 4 of the National Qualification Framework
Qualification awarded by:	HEI		National Awarding Body such as City & Guilds

Figure 26: ITT (FE) routes (OFSTED, 2003b, p.10)

The ways in which the standards and related regulations were mediated into ITT courses reflected the cultural traditions of the colleges, the HEIs and City & Guilds.

In-service City & Guilds

As I recounted in Chapter 6, the City & Guilds teaching certificates were designed as unit-based programmes to meet QCA requirements. Each unit had to be discretely assessed. Stage 1 consisted of 8 units and 8 linked assignments. Stage 2 consisted of 10 units and a further 10 assignments as listed below (City and Guilds, 2003). The titles of the units reflect the 8 areas of the FENTO standards.

City & Guilds 7407 stage 1 units		City & Guilds 7407 stage 2 units	
Unit	Title	Unit	Title
101	Assess learners' needs	109	Identify and assess learners' needs
102	Session plan and teaching	110	Plan and manage the learning process
103	Teaching and learning activities	111	Use techniques that facilitate learning
104	Select resources	112	Principles of learning
105	Learner support	113	Communication seminar paper
106	Assessment activity	114	Develop resources
107	Self-evaluation	115	Support and guidance
108	Observe a teacher	116	Assessment
		117	Educational issues
		118	Personal development

Figure 27: Structure of City & Guilds Certificates in FE Teaching (City & Guilds, 2003)

Trainees that took the two stages in one academic year, the norm at City and most other colleges (OFSTED 2006), were required to complete 18 assignments, as well as to maintain a log of their teaching, a professional development journal, and to pass 4 assessed observations of teaching practice. The in-course assessment was based on set City & Guilds assignments. For both trainees and teacher educators, the ways in which standards were related to the curriculum was externally prescribed, as the extract illustrates.

Teacher-educator: "I can't quote you the FENTO standards. I've got no idea. I mean I know because City & Guilds unit guidelines does do it but they've done that for us so they will say that every unit, say it's principles of learning, they will specify which FENTO standards the learning outcomes of this unit are linked to, so they've done that job and I'm pleased because I don't want to have to make that relationship, it's been done so I can't quote the FENTO standards. I mean I've a vague idea what they say, so they have been translated by City & Guilds."

AN: "And you're recipients of that.".?

Teacher-educator: "Yes we are recipients of that translation. And I don't go on about the FENTO standards at all. I mean I'll give you a handbook later on and you can see what my students get and there will be a reference to the FENTO standards but I don't say in every lesson – in this lesson on the principles of learning you will be meeting 1.2 , 3.1 , 4.2 etc. of the FENTO standards."

Teacher-educator – City College

The 18-unit structure led to over-assessment. The view of the teacher-educator below reflects the findings of the OFSTED (2006) survey report on NAB courses.

"I'm quite clear that City & Guilds over assesses them and repeats the assessment from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and I actually feel very sorry for them. I think it's really tough, and they are struggling breathlessly. I mean not only the journal every week but on the Stage 1, a 12 week course and 8 units is ridiculous, and then some of those units just pop up again in stage 2. So I would like City & Guilds or the Government or somebody to recognise that people are just pressured so much."

Teacher-educator, City College

All their assignments followed a common pattern, established by City & Guilds after a protracted process of FENTO endorsement, where the standards were captured in 'ability outcomes' and related to a task which was seen to be at level 4 of the National Qualification Framework. Almost all the tasks had to be written up in the form of short reports or essays and referenced, using the Harvard system. These in themselves are quite challenging tasks for trainees, who enter FE teaching from an occupational background, where a high level of written skills is not required, and who may have little, if any HE experience. The following example, from an assignment from one of the stage 2 units illustrates the approach.

Unit 115: Support and Guidance

Unit aims

- To enable learners to access guidance and support in relation to identified needs and progression opportunities
- To establish methods of promoting learner responsibility and autonomy
- To understand ways of providing personal support for learners

Ability outcomes (City & Guilds have related these to particular FENTO standards)

By the end of the unit, the student should be able to:

1. Show how learners have been helped and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their study and work organizational skills.
2. Describe instances where opportunities have been taken to assist learners with improving their basic and key skills.

3, 4 and 5 follow the same approach.

Assessment

You are required to:

1. Define a group of learners (ideally those identified in Unit 109) and describe how support and guidance can be provided.
2. Identify what agencies and support are available if a student needs to be referred.
3. Comment on the effectiveness of these agencies and support.

Source: Student Handbook, City College

Although the example of assessment from the unit above may look cut and dried, when I questioned teacher educators about the usefulness of the standards in assessing trainees, I got the following response from the teacher-educator in charge of the City programmes who was extremely familiar with occupational standards from working on NVQ and GNVQ programmes. He suggested that despite the best efforts of the awarding body to build standards into assignments, the holistic judgement of individual assessors was crucial.

AN: In common language if you talk about standard it normally means something precise. There is a standard which you've got to reach. Do you see the standards in that sense?

Curriculum Manager of ITT courses: I think in an interpretation of those standards and the meeting of those standards like any NVQ they are only as good as the assessor who assesses against them. If you look at those standards and you want to take them very literally and grade each of your learners against the criteria, you can do that. You could also take a holistic approach and just get the feeling that they are a good teacher and therefore they meet the standards. My experience over the years has taught me that its' such a subject of reality when it comes to anything like that, even though they are concrete but the interpretation of them isn't.

Curriculum Manager of ITT courses at City College

Pre-service PGCE at City College

The approach to FENTO standards on the ITT course being taken by pre-service students offered a marked contrast to the prescriptive assessment regime of City & Guilds. Trainees attended the university, for 2 days, the college for 2 days per week during the first term, and the host university for 1 day and their placement for 3 days during the second and third terms. The taught elements of their programmes were determined by the HEI which had been through its own process of FENTO endorsement. Three principal aims were highlighted in the student handbook. These were: the need for trainees to develop critical self-awareness linked to Schon's (1983) notion of reflective practice; to develop their knowledge of post-16 issues; and to demonstrate classroom competence. The FENTO standards were mapped into 5 key themes that ran throughout the course and related to 3 core modules, one per term; in effect a much simpler course structure than the City & Guilds programmes. The full set of standards was included in the student handbook. As part of self-evaluation, each trainee was asked to keep a log of their lessons and to comment on the FENTO standards that they had covered in their own teaching practice.

Themes
1. Introduction to teaching and learning in PCET 2. Supporting Learning 3. PCET Issues and Policies 4. Broader Professional Issues 5.Research and Writing
Core Modules (1 per term) Term 1: Introduction to teaching and learning Term 2: Supporting Learners Term 3: Academic Option

Figure 28: Pre-service PGCE at City College

The general approach was very open-ended. Keeping a reflective journal and teaching logs was a course requirement, but this encouraged reflection on theoretical concepts rather than simply logging evidence against a FENTO

checklist. There were fewer and more traditional academic assignments that involved exploring the theoretical literature. The course still included an option module, unlike the City & Guilds programmes.

The in-service and pre-service PGCE/Cert Ed. qualifications at Provincial College

The ITT courses at Provincial College appeared to be half-way between the relatively prescriptive City & Guilds regime, and the more open-ended example of the PGCE taken by pre-service trainees at City. The ITT programmes had been entirely written by the teacher-education team, but validated by a regional university. As I explained in Chapter 3, this is a relatively common type of HEI/FE partnership. Given their location in a college with substantial HE provision, the programmes were also designed to cater for staff teaching on HE courses, wanting accreditation from the Institute for Learning and Teaching.[27] They were designed therefore to cover two sets of quite contrasting standards. The statement of philosophy from the student handbook has a very different feel from City & Guilds in that it emphasizes values that are associated with H.E. These included:

- *Reflective practice and a commitment to scholarship*
- *Collegiality and collaboration*
- *The centrality of learner autonomy*
- *Entitlement, equality and inclusiveness.*

Teacher educators saw the process of deciding on curriculum content as open-ended and creative and had not felt unduly constrained by the FENTO standards.

"We worked as a team I kind of led it, I didn't look actually at anything, I didn't look at any of the standards, I had my framework of the 6 modules and decided what would be the most sensible, the most beneficial things to actually teach people about teaching, and I'm really pleased that I'd started with that. Once I had that done, I went back to see how it fitted. And then you do amend it and tweak it and change it and say how can I ensure that the

[27] It became the HE Academy.

standards are covered? It was a question of mapping them into each module. And module 6 which is the integrated module we came up with the idea of the portfolio, which is sort of explicitly looking for the standards as a way of saying well actually everything is covered, but it's another opportunity to do it. So we do know that there is evidence of all the standards being addressed. But we certainly didn't want to do a kind of tick list approach to it."

PGCE Course Leader – Provincial College

However, one constraint had been the credit-accumulation structure of the validating university that insisted on 20-unit modules, and a PGCE that was at level 6 (third-year honours standard). The course was based upon 6 modules at HE level 4, for the Cert. Ed. and HE level 6, for the PGCE. The titles of the modules were chosen by the local course team and reflected the HE context in which the curriculum had been developed.

Module 1: The Context of Teaching and Learning
Module 2: Managing the Learning Environment
Module 3: Assessing Teaching and Learning
Module 4: Student Guidance and Support
Module 5: Curriculum Design Issues in PCET
Module 6: Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Modules 1, 2 and 3 are studied during year one for in-service trainees. Modules 4 and 5 are studied during year two. Module 6 spans the entire duration of the programme and underpins the essence of professional development.

Figure 29: Extract from Student Handbook for Cert. Ed/PGCE (Provincial College)

When I asked teacher educators how the curriculum was related to the FENTO standards, they contrasted the ways in which standards framed ITT and NVQ courses. Their comments reflected FENTO guidance that standards should be covered in course content rather than through assessment outcomes. For the reflective practice module, trainees were required to present a log of evidence against the FENTO standards to demonstrate their contribution of to professional development. So, it was only at the culmination of assessment that trainees had to directly address standards. As the second extract below suggests, this seemed the only practical way of covering hundreds of standards.

Teacher educator: The standards are evidenced through their module assignments; all of that work is done when they get their assignment or assessment brief. It's already mapped in for them. It's only almost towards the end of the course, when they are finalising all of their course work and the portfolio, then they would actually see how they have met all of those. So it's not really approached like an NVQ where you take the standards, you discuss what people are doing and then evidence it, it's not really approached in that way. Although they do have those standards in their handbook, we are not working from them.

And

I think when you first see them they look like a bit like a wish list. You have got this, whatever they are, 100 standards, and I think you have to stand back and say well if we go the tick box approach we won't cover them.

Teacher educator – Provincial College

From the brief descriptions of the qualifications and taught elements of the courses at the two colleges, it is apparent that very different approaches were adopted towards the standards. These ranged from the tight City & Guilds regime, which attempted to relate standards to each assessment unit to more permissive stances with the HEI qualifications. I will now turn to trainees' experiences of learning in these 2 workplaces and give much more emphasis to the non-taught elements of the curricula.

8.3 Standards, trainee biographies and experience

My original sample contained 18 trainees, 10 from Provincial and 8 from City College. By the spring term, I experienced some attrition and was left with 14 trainees, all of whom I interviewed twice and 5 of whom I interviewed 3 times, in accordance with the interview protocols that I described in Chapter 4. The backgrounds of these 14, in terms of age, gender, career routes and qualifications are illustrated in the table.

Trainee/sub-group/(No. of interviews)	Age-range	Gender	Employment status	Highest qual.	Route to highest qual. and FE teaching	No. of years teaching	Occupational Background
1)In-service C&G (3)	50-60	F	FT technician/ voluntary teacher	Craft/level 3	School/work/FE	2	Hairdressing
2)In-service C&G (3)	30-40	F	FT teacher (temporary)	Degree	School/HEI/work	1	IT/Business
3)In-service C&G (2))	30-40	M	Part-time teacher	Degree	School/HEI/work	4	Design/IT
4)Pre-service (HEI) PGCE (2)	20-30	F	Full-time student	Degree	School/HEI/work	0	Youth Service
5)Pre-service (HEI) PGCE (2)	30-40	M	Full-time student	Degree	School/work/FE/ HEI	0	Civil Service
6)Pre-service (HEI) PGCE (2)	30-40	M	Full-time student/PT teacher	Degree	School/HEI/work	0	Art and Design
7)In-service PGCE (2)	40-50	M	Fractional teacher	Degree	School/HEI/work	1	Computing/IT
8)In-service Cert. Ed (2)	40-50	F	PT Teacher	Level 3	School/HEI/work	Over 5	Training/SLDD
9)In-service Cert. Ed (2)	50-60	M	FT instructor/teacher	Craft/ level 3	School/apprentice/ work	Over 5	Engineering
10)In-service Cert. Ed (3)	40-50	M	FT instructor/teacher	Degree	School/apprentice/ work	Over 5	Engineering
11)Pre-service (FE) Cert. Ed (3)	40-50	M	Full-time student	Craft/level 3	School/apprentice/ work	0	Photography
12)Pre-service (FE) PGCE (2)	40-50	F	Full-time student//PT teacher	Degree	School/work/FE	1 as learning support asst.	Nursing
13)Pre-service (FE) PGCE (2)	40-50	F	Full-time student	Masters	School/FE/work	0	Business/ Personnel
14)Pre-service (FE) PGCE (3)	50-60	M	Full-time student/PT teacher	Degree	School/apprentice/ work	1 as learning support asst.	Telecomm/ engineering

Figure 30 - Attributes of trainees (rows 1 to 6 from City and rows 7 to 14 from Provincial College)

At City my research participants fell into the 2 main groups taking the qualifications; 3 in-service trainees (orange) taking City & Guilds and 3 pre-service PGCE trainees (green) on placement. At Provincial, I had a pre-service group of 4 trainees (cream), who were undertaking both the taught and practice elements of a one-year Cert. Ed/PGCE at the college, and an in-service group of 4 trainees (pink), taking the same qualification through part-time study over 2 years. The data revealed that the common distinction between pre and in-service ITT can be misleading. The 4 trainees at Provincial College, labelled as pre-service, might equally have been described

as in-service. This is because both the taught and workplace elements of their ITT took place at the one college, and 2 of the 4 had had some prior teaching experience. Whilst undertaking the pre-service ITT course, two were employed on part-time teaching contracts. So, in effect the trainees were following, what could be described as a 'teaching apprenticeship.' Describing these qualifications as initial is also inaccurate. As the table illustrates, 9 out of the 14 trainees were aged 40 or over and of these 3 were in the 50 to 60 age group. Recent research (Parsons and Berry-Lound, 2004) describes the FE teaching workforce as 'greying'. In common with most new entrants to FE, this group started teaching after gaining much work and life experience. It would be more accurate to describe their ITT as mid-career (Eraut, 2002) qualifications. Unsurprisingly, therefore issues of transition and change were very much to the forefront of their minds. Many were familiar with occupational standards from their experience in previous jobs. This influenced their perception of the purpose and importance of the FENTO standards. The group was also mixed in terms of employment status. Many FE teachers progress into full-time teaching having started as part-time teachers or through working as instructors, technicians and learning-support assistants. Nine trainees had experienced one or more of these roles. In a sense therefore, the colleges had 'grown their own' teachers. This is typical of FE in general, where it is often hard to recruit staff through national advertising. It would also be misleading to describe the group as 'new teachers' in that 10 had some teaching experience, as part-time teachers or as technicians and instructors.

I was initially surprised by the high proportion of graduates, 10 out of 14, especially on City & Guilds. Whilst I had not anticipated this distribution, it matches the most recent evidence on the backgrounds of staff in further and adult education. Robbins and Berry-Lound's study found that 8 out of 10 teachers had a first-degree level qualification. What is far more revealing however, are the routes that the trainees had taken into HE and to FE teaching. Not a single trainee had moved straight from school to HE and then to teaching. All had substantial experience in other occupations. Six had moved from school to HE to work and then entered FE teaching. Another 6

had gained their degrees as adult students after leaving school at 15 or 16. Many had taken qualifications in further education colleges, as either full or part-time students (including as part of off-the-job apprenticeship training). What was also striking was that 8 of the trainees had been students at City or Provincial College and had only ever studied and taught in one institution. In other words, their whole professional development was confined to one institution. I was keen to include trainees from more traditional industrial backgrounds, such as engineering, where males predominate. This may have distorted the gender breakdown of 8 males and 6 females, which is not representative of FE in general, where female employees make up 60 percent. Four of the trainees from the inner-city college were from ethnic minorities – although not one of these was from the Bangladeshi community, who were the dominant ethnic group in the local area. In this sense, the trainees were representative of teaching staff at the college, which had great difficulty in recruiting teachers from its local community.

In summary, the attributes that the trainees displayed are typical of the 'spiky profiles' of adult learners. They illustrate a huge diversity of experience of work, FE, HE and apprenticeship training. As such they represent a very considerable contrast to the more traditional linear route from school to university to teaching that applies to most primary and secondary teachers. The great diversity of backgrounds of FE teachers raises a major issue for translating common standards for teaching and learning in that it could be argued that a precondition for implementing common standards is some commonality in the group or community, for which the standards are designed.

As the table also shows, I interviewed all the trainees on two occasions and 5 on three occasions between October 2003 and June 2005. As I described in Chapter 4, (see Appendices 3 and 4) for the first set of interviews, I concentrated on trainees' biographies and their initial perceptions of standards and the workplace. For the second interviews, I focussed more strongly on trainees' experiences in the workplace; the opportunities that they had gained for participating in different professional areas linked to the

standards. For the third interviews, I used trainees' assignments and reflective diaries, as the starting point, for a discussion of how the trainees perceived the roles of standards in their assessment and wider professional development. In drawing on the extracts from the interviews, I have used the trainee numbers from the table, so that the reader can easily locate the source of the interview extract.

In-service City and Guilds trainees at City

These trainees had entered FE having had substantial experience in other occupations, trainee 1 from hairdressing, trainee 2 from a combination of business and IT and trainee 3 from a design/IT background. Their employment status, locations within the college and learning careers were very different. None had a permanent full-time teaching job. Trainee 1 combined a technician role, working in the college's hairdressing salon, with voluntary teaching, to ensure that she had sufficient hours to meet the FENTO requirement for teaching practice. Trainee 2 was in his first year of teaching and was employed on a temporary full-time contract covering a full-time teacher on maternity leave. Trainee 3 could be described as a full-time part-timer, in that he taught 17 hours per week, on an hourly-paid contract. He taught web design and video productions in the Creative Arts Department. The ways in which they perceived the standards reflected their unique trajectories into FE teaching. Trainee 1 had been trained as a hairdresser and before that had worked as a secretary. She felt familiar with occupational standards from having taken NVQ qualifications previously and saw the FENTO standards as akin to what she had encountered before.

Trainee 1: "With my background again, most of my jobs that I have done from being a secretary, I've worked with codes and standards as well, I have to keep up with codes and standards, and now into the teaching I've got to keep up with FENTO standards, that's why they're different but there is link, kind of time management, and planning, structure."

Trainees 2 and 3 had quite different orientations to the standards. Both had been through university, followed by industry and had not encountered

standards before, despite substantial occupational experience. They were initially surprised when I related their course assessment to standards and trainee 3 made it clear that his main concern was getting through the course and standards were just a hurdle that had to be successfully negotiated.

Trainee 3: "I know its' degree level, that's about all I know. I worked to the standards that we were given. We were given a course booklet which linked what we had to produce to the FENTO standards, which I didn't really look at that much. They gave me an assignment of 1000 words on communication. I just answered all the questions. I noticed that the questions they gave you were the same as the FENTO standards, but I kind of ignored them. So it was relatively easy, you had to read the brief carefully, there would be like 3 questions, you had to make sure you answered each question, 250 words on each, not difficult."

In discussions about the standards, trainee 2 became deeply interested in the relationship between standards, which he found remote, and their relationship with the conventions and expectations of the new workplace and occupation he had joined. He tried to make a connection between the standards and becoming an FE teacher. Often, he found that he couldn't, as the following extract illustrates. This became a recurrent theme in interviews with trainees at both colleges and is paradoxical given that the standards were derived from an occupational mapping exercise.

Trainee 2: "Here's one which is a great example. I've been out of education a long time and my students said to me, 'we had mock exams last week'. Then to follow-up, towards the end of last week, I went into some English, for these students. It's a really good idea because their written comprehension isn't always very good. They were going 'come on sir, why are we doing all this', and I sort of said well it's to do with your exams, the reason why some of you scored zero on this question is because you didn't understand the question. They said 'well in our GCSE's, we can ask the invigilator to explain the question for us'. I thought it's rubbish, but I wasn't sure, and they all said yes that had happened to them in GCSEs, and it may well have happened. I went home and I spoke to my wife and she said nonsense, don't be ridiculous, and I spoke to my line manager, and even though I knew it was nonsense myself I had to say to her, and she sort of said 'absolute bollocks'. I mean she was quite alarmed that I might have had some doubt. Although I did doubt it, I still needed someone else to ram it home to me."

AN: "That's an interesting conversation about what is a normal expectation. I just want to draw a parallel with expectations and standards - you've also got

these FENTO standards on these 7407 assignments. Do the standards tell you the expectation"?

Trainee 2: "I was actually looking at them for an assignment just now, and no. Before I came to see you, I was looking at assignment 109, and the standards there didn't translate. I can see where FENTO are coming from but I can't translate that into what we have just talked about."

AN: "Into what I should do? What is expected"?

Trainee 2: "Yes what exactly I should do, in this situation. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm not."

The picture that I built up of City as an expansive environment was reflected in all 3 trainees' comments, who found that there were opportunities in the workplace to gain experience and gather evidence against the standards. Both trainees 2 and 3 who had entered FE directly from industry made a favourable comparison between the training received at City College and their former private sector jobs.

Trainee 3: "The last few jobs I had were in advertising where you got treated very well in terms of the resources, I mean you could almost get what you wanted, apart from stationery, but you could get the software you wanted. You didn't really get any training, they always promised you training but you never actually got it....here you are really struggling with limited resources and you have got to apply to get things mended and it is a very tedious experience. However, I've got a lot out of college in terms of training, in terms of new music, software, music skills and the fact that I've had this professional training is something I'd never ever had."

None of the 3 had mentors and their day-to-day support in the workplace reflected their different locations and employment statuses. Working in creative arts as a part-time teacher had constrained trainee 3's opportunities for learning through participating in meetings.

Trainee 3: "When you work as a freelance web designer you get thrown in at the deep end, and after about a day you kind of work out what you are doing. But here you come in for a few hours, you go, you don't meet the rest of the team, you don't go necessarily to the kind of team meetings if you've not been invited, and it can be a problem and you don't necessarily have the support that you'd like."

This quote triangulates well with the comment from the Head of City's Creative Arts Department (see p. 205). The other 2 trainees, both of whom were full-time, were able to access more support from co-workers. They commented that much of their learning was dependant on informal conversations with colleagues: the general chit chat of the day and guidance documents held in their departments.

Trainee 1: "Then we have got support in every area as well, we've got notes and feedback and updates and how to handle special needs, we've got an induction pack as well, so the college itself has got everything... But each department has actually got all this information, or one way or another you can link or ask questions and you will get them."

Trainee 2: "Did I learn from other people? Yes, I did. But I think I learnt best in the work room, talking to teachers and my line manager just in the general chit, chat of the day."

Whilst none of these trainees had access to a designated mentor, they all pointed to other formal mechanisms that the college had devised for helping staff to improve their teaching. Particularly helpful, in this regard was a system of peer observations, whereby all teachers were expected to observe 3 colleagues in their subject area. In turn they too were observed and received feedback. Given that one of the City & Guilds assignments (Unit 108) involved observing a teacher and evaluating the session with reference to the FENTO standards this peer-review process was particularly useful.

Trainee 2: "I found one teacher, a fairly senior teacher, someone that taught a very good lesson, but very old school style. He wasn't that comfortable about it, it took a few attempts before we could make it happen. And then he was like I've not done any planning, don't worry about it. But as it transpired he did a great lesson and I did learn. And I think you have to be positive. I could have been critical, but he had a style which I wouldn't use, but that's not to say it doesn't work for him."

Pre-service trainees at City College

This group's frame of reference for evaluating the support they received included comparing notes with pre-service trainees back at the university who were undertaking teaching practice at other colleges. Their comments about City, as a supportive environment, echo those of in-service trainees.

"It feels like a college where everyone knows what they are doing, enjoys working, I think the college is going somewhere, their philosophy is really good. It's quite right-on as well isn't it? **(Trainee 4)**

"I feel now that although I'm still at the beginning to be a teacher I still feel that I'm still part of the team here. Some students when we get back to the university we sort of share our college experiences. Some students are a lot less fortunate. I mean I've got good support. I can speak to a lot of the teachers, like the oldest teacher is my mentor, so I've always got support so I don't feel sort of isolated." **(Trainee 5)**

"I would enjoy working full-time here. It gives one the opportunity to develop oneself." **(Trainee 6)**

Pre-service-PGCE trainees' comments about inner-city college

All 3 trainees had substantial prior occupational experience - in youth work, in the civil service and in self-employment. As such they were able to compare the learning environment of City with other organizations that they had encountered. Two had actually taken an FE route into HE, in one case through an Access into HE course, in the other through a BTEC National Diploma. Both started with a strong commitment to what they saw as the inclusive ethos of FE.

Trainee 5: "I didn't sort of go through the traditional routes, so most of my experience and my education have actually been in further and higher education anyway, so it's almost like meeting people who may have had the same sort of schooling experience as myself."

Trainee 6: "It is my experience in FE that that was quite an important factor in wanting to teach in it, because I knew what it would be like. I knew what was involved in teaching."

All 3 trainees were allocated mentors as part of the partnership agreement between the HEI and the College. Although City was seen as an expansive environment, there was a strong element of self-advocacy involved in trainees using their mentors effectively. Mentors were themselves hard pressed for time and expected trainees to know what they wanted from placement.

Trainee 6: "My mentor said that I am paid the equivalent of 20 hours pay to be a mentor and I must do 60, 70 or 80 hours work and it's not going to happen, but you can do it yourself and this is what you have to do, and these are the people you need to speak to. So practically if I am interested in classroom management, she'll say go and observe their lesson. But it has all been self-negotiated really."

All 3 trainees were able to negotiate a wide breadth of experience by working across different departments and thus to gather evidence against the 8 areas of the FENTO standards. Often other co-workers rather than mentors were instrumental in helping trainees.

Trainee 4: "I think the difference between us and trainees in other placements is if we want to do something the opportunity is there for us to explore it. Like when I phoned X, she said, if you want to do something just be proactive and the college will allow you within that, people will be friendly they will invite you into their classrooms."

The trainee above was able to teach across different age ranges including those aged 14 -16, in which she was particularly interested. In response to questions about why they found the college so helpful, trainees put this down to the open and non-hierarchical character of City.

Trainee 4: "I think individual teachers like working here, that they're happy in the job.... Some of them are a bit overworked but I think that's just the fact of the job but largely people are committed to their students. They're committed to their job. And I think when you look at departments they communicate quite well you know on a kind of personal level and professional one. One thing that's quite good, I can never tell who is a manager in any of the departments because the organisation of their work is quite fluid and it doesn't appear that someone has beaten everyone around the head with a stick."

All 3 trainees were primarily interested in making the transition into becoming teachers. When questioned about the part played by the standards in their learning and assessment, they all adopted a fairly instrumental approach. In this sense their orientation towards the standards was very similar to trainees 2 and 3 from the in-service group. The extracts below don't indicate any deep sense of ownership.

Views of standards at the start of their ITT

Trainee 4: "I think the standards are kind of like a checklist. We are told in our book to go through the reflective journal and to mark in where we think we have achieved those standards. So you know I have read them through, I haven't exactly absorbed them."

Trainee 6: "They almost appear as check boxes, well they are check boxes. On assignments we have many of the FENTO standards, and when you are writing you look at them, if you want a paragraph to fit in with point 1, and another one for point 2. You use the assessment criteria we know what we have to do to fit in with it, it's on that level. I don't get the sense that I really engaged with them in a way any more than that."

The above views expressed at the start of their training had become even more set by the end of their course, especially when they found that teachers at City very rarely referred to the standards.

Trainees views of standards towards the end of ITT

Trainee 4: "I encounter them less and less. I read something the other day, I was reading one of the teaching books and it had the FENTO standards. I thought me and the FENTO standards have parted. It's because this term there is more emphasis on teaching and less on the theoretical side. Professionalism is much more am I on time and problems that I have at the moment and assessing people is much more a work orientated thing rather than a kind of theoretical, so my standards are related to 'do I think I'm doing the job right."

Trainee 5: "We have to meet FENTO standards to pass the assignments. You tend not to hear a great deal about FENTO here in practise, you hear a lot about it at the University."

In-service Cert. Ed/PGCE trainees at Provincial College

These trainees had very different profiles from those of the City College group. Three were 'old hands' who had taught for over 5 years, without having taken an ITT qualification. They had become caught up in the college's response to the LSC target of having over 90% of their full-time staff with an ITT qualification by 2006. One of the teacher-educators tellingly described such staff as "conscripts rather than volunteers", in the sense that many felt forced to take the course. Their occupational backgrounds were also very different from those at City College, in that 2 were engineers (trainees 9 and 10) teaching on work-based learning programmes at an off-campus training facility. One (trainee 8) was involved in courses for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (SLDD) and only one, trainee 7 could be described as a new teacher in that he had taught for 6 months before starting the PGCE. Their profile is quite interesting, given that the 2001 regulation was originally intended for new teachers. Interestingly both engineers were appointed as technicians, the SLDD teacher was part-time and had a portfolio of work in 2 different providers and trainee 7, an IT teacher, was on a one-year fixed term fractional teaching contract. So, in terms of the short-term nature of their employment contacts, there were many similarities with the trainees from City College.

The trainees had rich and contrasting biographies. All had experienced teaching or training roles, prior to FE. Trainee 7 had worked in software development advising clients using simulations and business games. He saw managing a complex role-play simulation, using on-line resources, as similar to student-led activities in his teaching. Trainee 8 had a portfolio of different part-time teaching and training roles, she had worked as a teaching assistant in a secondary school, as a private tutor to GCSE students and had been trained to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Trainees 9 and 10

were similar. Both were employed on instructor contracts and hoped to become permanent FE teachers. One had worked as a trainer in the American Air Force and had served in the first Gulf War; the other as a trainer in local companies. Their locations within the college organization illustrated the complexity and diversity of Provincial College. Only trainee 7 worked in a conventional subject department. Trainee 8 worked for the cross-college unit responsible for SLDD. The other two trainees had worked for several years for a private training organization that had been absorbed by the college.

These contrasting biographies and locations were reflected in how they viewed the workplace as a site for their own learning. None saw the college as an employer that had a comprehensive approach to developing staff expertise. When questioned about the support that they had received when entering FE teaching, two of them used the phrase of having been *thrown in at the deep-end* as the extract below illustrates.

Trainee 9: "Laissez-faire - basically like being dumped in the deep end, seeing I have had some background with training and also tutoring, they kind of say well here you go."

Opportunities for participation in training and professional development were affected by the pressure of working on part-time and technician contracts.

Trainee 8: "I'm finding that it's just affecting my personal development. And so there is so much I'd like to learn and so much I'd like to get involved in, but I just can't, I feel constrained by the fact that I am an hourly paid part-timer, sort of the bottom of the ladder really for training and everything."

Trainee 10: "For me as far as the Cert Ed course, this is my 2nd shot at it, because I tried this course last year, but unfortunately I had to dip off because of the workload. It was either course work or my candidates and unfortunately my standards are candidates come first, my own personal gain we'll worry about later... I go from Monday to Thursday, I run from 8:30 to 4:00 with a ½ hour lunch, then Fridays basically I am doing outside assessments or I might be doing short courses for the afternoon."

The trainees reinforced the comments of curriculum managers presented in Chapter 7 about the tension between the managerial pressures to achieve

funding targets and their own professional priorities. The overriding object of the college to recruit students was recognized quite clearly.

> **Trainee 7**: "One of the things I do enjoy about the college, as a new teacher, is that cynically I look at it and say well the college is a business that produces qualifications, that's its output, that's what people buy from it, and because of that you have to value your own product, you have to eat your own dog food, if you like."

Research on the impact of external policy drivers on behaviour, (Spours, Coffield and Gregson, 2007) found that some colleges were able to ameliorate the effects of external targets by integrating them into their own development priorities, whilst others simply reproduced the external drivers, for example LSC targets, so that they became the college's own aims. City seems to fit the former model whilst Provincial College seems to fit the latter. A very intrusive managerial approach, based upon the achievement of LSC and national funding targets, pervaded all organizational processes. Even where initiatives had been introduced, such as the peer observation of teaching, ostensibly similar to the scheme at City, they were overlain with managerial intervention. Earlier in her career, trainee 8 had been an EFL teacher and was used to working as part of a closely-knit teaching team. She was critical of the isolation she experienced at Provincial College and found that management initiatives did not reflect a collaborative approach.

> **Trainee 8**: "I assume that teachers jealously guard what goes on in their classroom, which was not the case at all as an EFL teacher, particularly in a teacher training establishment. So yes, first of all I thought it was very strange that people didn't sit in and there was no formal observation of lessons at all. Later on there was a system of peer observation, but it wasn't really peer observation in the sense that certain people were designated as peers, which meant that they weren't really peers they were designated observers."

Like many providers Provincial College had introduced a system of managerial observations of lessons linked to the preparation of annual self-assessment reports for the LSC and OFSTED. This operated quite separately

from ITT, but shaped trainees perceptions of the role of teaching as far as management were concerned. Trainee 8 highlighted that this was quite different from the more collaborative EFL teaching observations, to which she had been used.

Trainee 8: "We don't have peer observation now. We have management observation which is a much more formal system."

A.N: "Is it linked to appraisal"?

Trainee 8: "Yes. And it is much more formal in that we are graded and notes are given. But I don't feel that it really helps the community of teachers because I feel that there is still an element of secrecy about what goes on. I think it leads to an attitude of distrust between teachers, which I think is unfortunate because I think when I look back on EFL teaching we knew that we were all observing each other, we were all in the same boat, and we found it easier to share good practise in that way."

Cynicism about management control strongly influenced their attitudes to the ITT course and standards. All 4 trainees had a very instrumental attitude. They regarded the standards as something they had to get through in order to gain the required teaching qualification, as opposed to something they wanted to make their own, and which might extend their knowledge. Their perceptions in this regard were strikingly similar to those of the trainees at City. In perhaps, the most penetrating reflection of the relationship between standards and professionalism, trainee 8, articulated very clearly the difference between national standards as an external, imposed code and the adoption of a shared code of professional behaviour.

Trainee 8: FENTO. "The first time I heard this acronym was when I started the course."

A.N.: "So FENTO meant nothing to you until about 3 months ago, or even less than that"?

Trainee 8: "I had no idea about FENTO standards."

There follows an interesting debate about the difference between codification and sharing and between managerial and professional orientations.

A.N: "What does it mean to you now"?

Trainee 8: "Probably something else that I have to memorise. I think it is quite important that good practice needs to be codified but I think more important it needs to be shared."

A.N.: "Is there a difference, do you think between the codification and the sharing"?

Trainee 8: "Yes. I think when it is codified it comes out as bold statements of what is good practice, but it doesn't give you an intuitive feel about what the best thing to do is in certain circumstances. So yes I think it's a distillation of good practice. Interestingly enough we have just been talking about professionalism and looking at ... ideas on professionalism and how it places a great emphasis on the intuitive, and I suppose one thing you do gain with experience is an intuitive idea what is the best thing to do in these circumstances, and I suppose the longer one is in teaching the more one relies on intuition and less on formal statements of codes."

A.N.: "But we live in an age where there are a lot of standards around."

Trainee 8: "Exactly. So it is encouraging if one looks back on the codes to say yes, they do reflect good practice, and I suppose their intention then is to promulgate good practise, but I still think that sharing good practice at a class-rich level is far more important than the imposition of certain codes."

Although 3 of the trainees were experienced teachers, they had quite contrasting dispositions about the value of ITT. Despite similarities in their locations, the two WBL instructors had strikingly different views. This emerged when we considered their professional development journal – where they had logged their progress against the standards.

Trainee 10: "There's one particular assignment, PDP, Personal Development Plan, where you see yourself in 5 years, against the standards. I'm not looking forward to 5 years, I'm looking at what's happening tomorrow, what's going to happen Monday, what happens in 5 years I don't know. I may be at Provincial College, I may not be. So for me to fill out this PDP, I'm not looking at that, I'm looking at what's happening, here and now, I'm not a day dreamer and look at the future. Basically if I was to show it to you, it's all bunk, nothing applies, it's just writing down what they want to see, what they want to hear, just so I can get that piece of paper saying that I can teach."

Trainee 9, who had taught for over 10 years, felt that there was more he could learn, even when he found the college and its processes unhelpful.

Trainee 9: "I can analyse, or hope to analyse the way in which I can help the youngsters best, because I can see already Cert. Ed. is going to give you information on like learner requirements and styles of teaching, and you can adapt like that and get the best possible path for the candidates."

Pre-service trainees at Provincial College

As I commented earlier, these trainees were serving a teaching apprenticeship, in that all the taught and practice elements took place at Provincial College. In terms of the range of their experience before coming into teaching, the group was as diverse as the in-service trainees. Between them the 4 trainees had a vast range of occupational experience; a combined total of almost 200 years in photography, nursing, personnel management and telecommunications. Three were graduates on the PGCE and one had taken a craft route into photography and was on the Cert. Ed. All of them had built up strong occupational identities before entering FE. As was the case with the trainees from City, this strongly influenced the ways in which they viewed standards and ITT. In response to a general question about standards at their first interview, trainees often responded with references to their own occupational tradition. The response of trainee 11, a photographer illustrates this most graphically.

Trainee 11: "There was an Association of Photographers which tried to establish standards for the industry which was actually at that point, the Association of Fashion, Editorial and Advertising Photographers, as opposed to wedding, portrait and whatever. And they did try to set standards. There were no qualifications as such, but in the wedding, portrait and high street photography, there were."

AN: But did you start off with a clear conception of these are the standards I've got to achieve them?

Trainee 11: My standard of photography was taking a picture that someone wanted to buy, and that was it.

A much bigger issue for 2 of them was which standards they should follow. The work of the college straddled FE and HE and they wanted to gain experience of teaching their subjects across the range. The PGCE requirement based on FENTO endorsement was that trainees needed to teach 120 hours in FE. This precluded them from gaining the accreditation needed for HE teaching. This placed them in a dilemma, which they resolved by restricting their teaching to FE courses. I could not help but agree with comment from trainee 14 below that maintaining separate standards and routes was bizarre.

Trainee 13: "They both require 120 hours in their own area. They have to be experienced in their own area, and that to me is a down side, but it's a shame because I was sort of hoping, because I don't have any teaching experience, I've had training experiences in industry but it's quite a different cultural environment, I was hoping to be able to straddle the two and maybe get more experience before I had to make that choice."

Trainee 14: "I really found it quite bizarre coming to this, that there should be this separation, because after all a teacher is the function, it must be the same, I know that types of learners may vary and so on, but the function is very much the same whether you are in FE or HE."

Trainees' initial perceptions rooted in their occupational identities were often further reinforced by their placements in college departments. Many studies (Coffield et al., 2005; Lucas et al., 2004; Robson, 2006) have found that strong sub-cultures coexist in the same college that often reflect FE teachers' original occupations. All 4 trainees were placed in different departments of the college which had very different occupational traditions. Each also had a specialist mentor who often reinforced these occupational cultures. The quality of mentoring and other forms of support trainees received from line managers and co-workers very much tied in with the picture that I painted in Chapter 7 of a fragmented organization where management had not built up a tradition of systematically developing staff expertise.

In the absence of a strong organizational ethos, the quality of mentoring tended to reflect the local circumstances that trainees encountered and particularly whether particular curriculum departments saw value in nurturing new teachers. Trainee 12 found herself placed in a strong Department of Health and Social Care, where mentors and other co-workers gave guidance about teaching and assessment.

Trainee 12: "The more time you spent with your mentor and the group the more I feel comfortable going in to the office and feel comfortable in there and sort of being one of them really, well not of them, but you feel more comfortable going there and use their coffee machine and be sort of involved a bit more. I could sit in on lectures and be given all the handouts and discuss things in the lecture, but again because I have to be active and do things to make it sink in, watching my mentors, working with them, seeing how they address different situations and things, that I've sort of followed them quite a lot."

Two out of the 4 trainees enjoyed strong support of the kind illustrated in the extract above and it was clear from talking to 2 of their mentors that the relationship involved reciprocal learning. The mentor of trainee 14 described how both parties benefited.

Mentor of trainee 14: "Yes we started off in that he observed me, which is the way that seems to work out, and then he would share a little bit of the class with me, and now he's actually running a two-hour session which he is particularly good at which is the electric side, and I'm letting him actually develop. I've given him a syllabus and we've talked through a scheme of work and we've discussed it and sorted it and we've come to some conclusions about what he needs to do.

AN: "It sounds like quite a big investment of your time."

Mentor of trainee 14: "In a sense yes, but I'm getting a lot from it as well because I know I've been doing this for 25 years but I think you can become very, very blasé about what you do in a classroom situation, and whilst I'm relatively confident that what I do is of reasonable quality, I've noticed that he has given me some reminders about some of the things that maybe I could try."

Where trainees encountered little support from their host department, the effect could be devastating. Trainee 11, from a craft background found the

adjustment to FE extremely difficult from the start. He joined a tiny photography section and received very little support from his mentor and other colleagues. Far from worrying about standards, he found getting to grips with basic aspects of working in FE quite impenetrable. At the start of the year he made the following comment.

Trainee 10 "The knowledge of the college life and education, I had none and I don't feel that it has really been covered on the course. For instance, I don't even know what my earning capacity could be as a lecturer. I don't know the pay scales or how it works. People talk about this point and that and I earn this and I earn that, I do three days I do four days, I do a week, and I don't know all of those things and I feel that sometimes some of the parts of the education system have been overlooked because the people putting the course together expect people coming in to it to know and if they are attracting people like myself then I think that's got to be made clear."

When I interviewed him for the third time, at the end of the academic year, he was having great difficulty in putting together his portfolio, to demonstrate that he had gained experience of key standards, particularly assessment. During the year he had had little experience of setting and marking work and this had not been picked up by his mentor.

Trainee 11: "I am having difficulty doing the portfolio because I just don't have the material to go in it. I can't even begin it and I've been to my tutor this morning and she's just saying you'll have to go and find the information or drag it out from somewhere. I don't seem to have the situation to produce it."

In contrast, by the end of the year trainee 14 who had been well supported throughout was able to reflect deeply about the standards as the rather long, but incisive conversation about the affective domain of teaching illustrates.

A.N: "How have the FENTO standards helped you in your day-to-day activities as an FE teacher"?

Trainee 14: "I've had quite a lot of thought about this really, and having said what we've just been discussing about whether these were definite things I thought of as rules. I suppose it's a little bit like the Highway Code in that when you are learning to drive you look at it closely, you know the rules.

Once you are driving it's very rare that you actually think about something, you know those rules intuitively. So there is some similarity there. I think also what it gives you is, one could easily write a job description around those FENTO standards, these are the things you have to do, and this is the quality at which you have to do them, you have to practise these things, and that includes development as well obviously with some of these standards. So I think they are useful in terms of getting to that stage of learning to teach. I think during teaching, I have to say that I probably don't consider it on a day-to-day basis. But if I had to match them up, some sort of matrix as to what I'd done during the last month, I probably could."

AN: "Can I pursue your analogy of the Highway Code a little? If I'm the passenger in a car I always think do I feel safe? I don't spend much time thinking about does this person engage the gear correctly, or does he/she put their foot on the accelerator, but I actually think to myself is this person capable, do I feel safe when I drive with them. I suppose if I pursued my analogy it would be - do your students regard you as a safe teacher"?

Trainee 14: "That they have trust in me doing that, yes. And certainly when they don't have that trust in people they are pretty quick to say so. So yes, I guess being safe, it is there. Certainly, I mean for me, there is also confidence, there is something there to measure oneself. Do you know these things? Are you doing these things? And trust obviously means different things. Does he know his subject? Does he know the content? For others it's is the guy going to bite my head off when I've given the wrong answer?."

I have included the long extract above because it resonated with a theme that all the pre-service trainees talked about – their emotional responses towards FE. When I outlined the FENTO standards in Chapter 5, I indicated how the original standards included a significant section on the affective domain of teaching and the values and attributes that teachers should demonstrate, which was then left out when the standards were adapted for ITT. It was clear that in making the transition to FE, it was this affective aspect, how it felt to become an FE teacher that engaged trainees. As the previous interview extracts illustrated, trainees often spoke about how their strong personal commitment to FE. This was often because they themselves had experienced chequered learning careers, and found that studying in FE had restored their self-esteem. This personal mission seemed to be paramount in their minds.

Trainee 12: "I had a very bad schooling. I left without any qualifications at all at 15. I didn't fit in because I was just one of those at school, it was probably the most unhappiest time of my life, so therefore I went for many years

learning, education that wasn't for me, it was a bad experience and I didn't want to go through it again. So when I went back to further education, initially in college A and then to this college, doing different courses, gradually I realised that it was really quite fun and I felt that I could achieve more than I realised I could .... And teaching now seems to me quite amazing that I have done this after having probably 20 years of really having low esteem."

8.4 Concluding comments

I will now reflect on the data that I have presented on trainees and teacher educators by considering the part played by standards, if any, in enriching the ITT curriculum and trainees' knowledge and understanding. As I outlined in Chapter 4, Vygotsky saw cultural tools as having the capacity to transform learning as individuals and groups engaged in mediating processes that expanded their Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through mediation they reduced the gap between their potential and actual levels of development (Cole and Wertsch, 2003). Cultural tools allowed more conceptual ways of understanding the world that enabled a shift to be made from 'everyday' to more 'scientific' thinking (Cole and Scribner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1996a; Vygotsky and Luria, 1994). Although it is a huge leap from Vygotsky to FENTO, it is legitimate to ask to what extent the standards have led to an enriching of curricula and trainees' learning? To what extent have they allowed trainees to move from a more situated to a wider professional frame of reference?

The 4 examples of ITT courses and trainees do not demonstrate that standards have had the effect of enriching learning and professional development. Both teacher educators and trainees were fairly dismissive of the role of standards in either shaping the curriculum or extending their understanding. For the teacher-educators involved in the City & Guilds programmes, standards were something that had been converted by the awarding body into what was seen as an over-assessed qualification. There was no evidence of teacher educators owning the standards or considering them as leading to qualifications that enriched trainees' development. Standards provided the framework for the 18 assignments that trainees had to get through to pass the two stages of the qualification. For teacher-educators

at Provincial College, the hundreds of FENTO standards meant that their PGCE had been designed without initial reference to standards and it was only after the qualification had been developed, that the ITT team had considered how standards were to be evidenced by trainees through their teaching logs. When I questioned teacher educators about the usefulness of standards in assessment, they recognised that the interpretation of standards was quite open-ended and they referred to more intuitive and holistic models for assessing their trainees.

Trainees adopted a predominantly instrumental attitude to the standards, particularly as they approached the end of their courses. They recognised that the standards framed their assignments and that they had to log evidence against them in their teaching portfolios. Standards were something that they had to get through; a checklist against which evidence had to be presented, rather than a tool that they spoke about as extending their knowledge and professionalism as trainee teachers. Those that had reflected more deeply about the standards saw a dissonance between standards and their experiences of learning to teach in these contrasting settings. For trainees that were new to FE the priority was getting to grips with the organizations and cultures that they had joined. Hager (2004) distinguishes between what he labels as 'standard' and 'new' paradigms of learning. The standard paradigm sees knowledge as exterior to mind and learning as "being stocked with ideas." (Hager, 2004, p.243) Learning is seen as the transmission of context-free propositional knowledge that each individual applies to their own situation and work context. In Chapter 3, I questioned whether teachers' knowledge could be seen in terms of the standard paradigm because teachers tend to work as members of teams and are primarily interested in the usefulness of knowledge in their day-to-day practical work (Chen, 2006). Hager goes onto describe a new paradigm of learning in which learning is seen in terms of collaborative action in the world rooted in the collective knowledge and behaviour of teams and organizations.

> "In workplaces, typical learning involves developing the gradually growing capacity to participate effectively in socially situated collaborative practices. This means being able to make holistic, context

> sensitive judgments about how to act in situations that may be more or less novel." (Hager, 2004, p.251)

The dissonance that trainees in my sample experienced between the FENTO standards and learning how to teach relates to these different conceptions of learning and knowledge. When trainee 4 (p.230) stated that at the end of the course that "he encountered standards less and less and that he and the FENTO standards had parted company and that professionalism was much more a work-orientated thing than theoretical", he was giving voice to this disjuncture between standards and his day-to-day experience as a newcomer in this work situation. Exactly, the same disjuncture was raised by trainee 8 from Provincial College when she contrasted the FENTO standards with EFL approaches (p.233) that she viewed as more akin to a professional model. There is a paradox here in that the FENTO standards arose from an occupational-mapping exercise (DfEE and FEDA, 1995) : finding out and cataloguing what FE teachers did. Yet by the time that they had been related to ITT, neither trainees nor teacher educators could perceive their value in learning to teach.

In his analysis of the consumption of cultural tools, Wertsch draws upon Bakhtin's (cited in Wertsch,1998, p. 58) analysis of how agents respond to the production of cultural tools. He makes a distinction between tactics that range from outright resistance to complete acceptance and refers to Bakhtin's notion of appropriation, where individuals or groups identify so strongly with a cultural tool that they internalize it and make it their own. Their own language and behaviour become imbued with the concept. Wertsch contrasts this with 'mastery'; a term used to describe a situation where agents understand a cultural tool and demonstrate expertise in its use, but do not identify with it. In such situations, the willingness to conform to what is demanded is more superficial and may reflect the fact that no alternative is perceived. In examining the stances that teacher educators and trainees adopted, I could find nothing that remotely resembled appropriation of standards. I would argue however that there was certainly mastery in the sense that all teacher educators and most trainees understood the game that had to be played,

whether in designing curricula that paid lip-service to the standards or completing assignments to prove coverage. In every case there was criticism, but not outright resistance as all recognized that standards were part of the landscape in which they had to go about their business, but had little to do with learning to teach. As one of the teacher educators from Provincial College put it to me "standards exist as some sort of parallel universe disconnected from the everyday concerns of teacher educators in colleges."

What was far more fundamental than national standards was the nature of the learning environment that trainees found themselves in and the personal resources that they brought with them as a result of their earlier learning careers. At the end of Chapter 7, having reviewed the two organizational contexts, I concluded that City was a far more expansive learning environment than Provincial College. The evidence from trainees that I have presented in this chapter reinforces the picture that in general trainees from City enjoyed far richer learning territories (Fuller and Unwin, 2004) than their counterparts at Provincial College. The irony is that standards were largely marginal to the processes of learning to teach in these contrasting workplaces. With or without them, trainees at City College would have been more likely to have had a richer learning experience.

CHAPTER 9 – CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

9.1 Standards as a bridge between policy and pedagogy

As I indicated in Chapter 4, I now return to my fourth research question:

- What are the implications of using standards as an instrument for reforming FE teacher training?

This thesis has examined how standards are mediated as they are used by different agents in policy, regulatory and pedagogical contexts. At every stage in their production and consumption, it has been apparent that standards have not served as an effective bridge. They have not led to consistency in the interpretation of professional training requirements or enhanced the quality of trainees' learning in the FE workplace. In drawing the different threads together I will make use of the 3 transition points (p.103), under which my findings were presented. I will distinguish between the FENTO standards, the mediation of which I have traced through from the policy contexts, to the FE workplace, and the LLUK standards, which I have only traced through the first and second transitions.

Production of standards

The decade between 1997 and 2007 has been dominated by standards-led reforms to ITT in PCET, predicated upon the belief that ever-more elaborate specifications of standards, regulations and qualifications will achieve the aim of a more professional teaching workforce in FE. The reaction of policy makers to the 2003 HMI report on the training of FE teachers (OFSTED, 2003b) that argued there were systemic weaknesses in FE teacher training, rooted in the impoverished experience of learning in the workplace, was to replace the FENTO regime with new standards, regulations and qualifications.

- Inherent problems with standards as a boundary-crossing tool

Both sets of standards are based on the premise that it is possible to codify occupational knowledge in a form that is relatively unambiguous and that will be easily translatable into regulations and qualifications. My thesis supports Wolf's (1995) critique of elaborate specifications based on occupational standards and particularly her comment that:

> "The ever-receding goal of total clarity derives not from bad luck or incompetence, but is actually inherent in the methodology adopted....The attempt to map out free-standing content and standards leads, again and again, to a never-ending spiral of specification."
>
> (ibid, p. 55)

In Chapter 5, I analysed the detailed text of both sets of standards and demonstrated their inherent ambiguity. I traced the iterations of the LLUK standards from their 6 domains, through to the specification of prescriptive learning outcomes and assessment criteria and concluded that hundreds of descriptors do not result in clarity of expectations for curriculum design or assessment. As I argued in Chapters 6 and 7, teacher educators and NABs that have had to turn standards into regulations, qualifications and ITT programmes have found their opaque nature unhelpful. In his profound reflections on the relationships between words as tools for mediating meaning, Vygotsky (1996b, p.238) observed that:

> "A simplified syntax, condensation and a greatly reduced number of words characterise the tendency to predication that appear in external speech when the partners know what is going on....Dialogue always presupposes in the partners sufficient knowledge to permit abbreviated speech."

In similar vein, Wenger (1996) sees codes as short-cuts used by Communities of Practice that have a history of shared knowledge and practices. Neither set of standards could be remotely described as shortcuts arising from the dialogue of a Community of Practice. They are exactly the opposite; over-elaborations, given the absence of shared meanings.

Policy makers have aggravated these intrinsic problems by attempting to impose common standards on a PCET sector that is fragmented and diverse. As I argued in Chapter 3, devising standards for the myriad of teaching roles in PCET is much more complex than setting standards for school or HE teachers. The QTS standards for schools teachers are differentiated by Key Stage and by National Curriculum subjects. This anchors them in easily recognisable groups of school teachers. The HE Academy has steered away from competence-based standards and found a model that is compatible with the traditions of autonomous universities. By contrast in PCET, first an NTO, now an SSC has persisted with imposing a single occupational model on a sector which is much less coherent than either schools or HE. Studies of FE teachers (Avis and Bathmaker, 2004; Avis and Bathmaker, 2006; Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002; Avis, Kendal and Parsons, 2003; Wallace, 2002) have found that Communities of Practice are weak or non-existent and that many staff identify with their former occupational group rather than with being a teacher.

In Chapter 3, I argued that using standards to either describe teachers' knowledge and activities or to assess their performance is inherently problematic because learning to teach is more akin to the activities of connoisseurs (Arnal and Burwood, 2003). Repeated engagement in social practice is fundamental, given that so may aspects of professional work involve the complex business of integrating subject, organizational and personal knowledge (Eraut, 1994; Eraut, 2005b) and doing so as part of a team. Teachers are not likely to be interested in standards per se, given that their prime interest is on their usefulness in practice, rather than whether standards as a form of codified knowledge provide an accurate representation of their activities (Chen, 2006). The reactions of teacher educators and trainees to the FENTO standards at both City and Provincial Colleges illustrate this point. Standards were not viewed as knowledge which helped trainees develop as professional teachers, but as externally-imposed codes against which they had to superficially map their achievements.

- Conflicting traditions embodied within the standards

Far from being absolute benchmarks with which to evaluate performance, the standards like all historical artefacts reflect the conflicts that were present at the time of their genesis. The FENTO standards were an uneasy compromise between the views of teacher educators from HEIs, who advocated a professional model based on reflective practice, and those from NTOs and the employment wing of DfES that promoted the occupational competence model. As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, the LLUK standards are also open-ended. When combined with a prescriptive LLUK qualifications framework however, where they are translated into learning outcomes and assessment criteria they come closer to competence statements. Both sets of standards reflect what Coffield (2006) describes as 'policy busyness' with one government initiative cascading upon another. When the original occupational mapping of FE was completed in 1995, NTOs were not part of the landscape, yet by the time the FENTO standards were launched in 1999, NTOs embodying elements of the old MSC tradition were a key part of the agenda. Within 4 years of the launch of FENTO, the idea of a wider SSC for lifelong learning had changed the situation again. The revised standards have been designed for a disparate lifelong learning sector and new policy tensions have arisen. The revised ITT qualifications have had to be calibrated against a new qualification and credit framework being piloted by QCA. LLUK, like other SSCs, has adjusted its stance to reflect the emphasis on 'employability' and 'skills' associated with the Foster (2005) and Leitch (2006) reports.

- Linear model of reform that takes insufficient account of the institutional logic of reform

With the development of the 1999 FENTO standards and the 2006 LLUK standards, policymakers have made the fallacious assumption that the most critical element of educational reform is defining national standards. Once this major project is achieved, the belief is that standards will then be converted

neatly into regulations, qualifications and then form the basis for the curriculum and training programmes. Following the announcement of the latest ITT reforms (DfES, 2004) the period until November 2006, went into agreeing standards. The development of regulations, qualifications and curricula was then compressed into the few months to September 2007. Underlying this model of reform is a linear notion that standards must be specified as the first step. Then regulations and qualifications can be developed that incorporate the standards. Only at the final stage are courses and ITT programmes developed that form the basis of what trainees actually experience. This model is based on very different assumptions from those of curriculum designers in universities and colleges, where standards are just one element in a complex process of building and negotiating a curriculum. The senior curriculum manager, whom I interviewed at City College, described the position of colleges in relation to standards and qualifications "as being at the end of a long food chain." Although a linear model looks neat and tidy, its fundamental weakness is that it is based on what Raffe (1997) describes as the intrinsic logic of reform. Policy makers assume that the conversion of standards into regulations and qualifications is a logical process without taking into account how standards and regulations are actually shaped in the complex pedagogical context of FE that I examined in Chapters 7 and 8. Insufficient attention is paid to the institutional factors that shape the implementation of policy. I have little doubt that the framers of the FENTO standards and 2001 statutory regulation were well intentioned, yet within 2 years of the legislation being passed, the Government was engaged in a further bout of reform, based on this linear model. This approach to policy implementation was further aggravated by the high turnover of policy teams and constant reorganizations within the Government. As I reported in Chapter 5, none of the civil servants that had been involved in the reforms linked to the FENTO standards was involved in the post-2004 reforms. The policy memory was short, so the new civil service teams in charge of implementing *Equipping our Teachers* (DfES, 2004a) were less sensitive to the factors likely to constrain the achievement of their policy aims.

The translation of standards into regulations, qualification and inspection frameworks

In their translation into other artefacts, such as regulations, inspection and qualification frameworks, standards are mediated into new forms. As I argued in Chapter Six, when relating standards to regulations, specific issues have to be addressed such as: to whom the standards are applicable and how the diverse range of teachers working in PCET should be defined in legislation. Finding resolutions to such issues has proved extremely problematic and as standards are converted into new artefacts, new and unforeseen consequences arise.

- Unintended consequences of reform

Neither the 2001, nor the 2007 statutory instruments, that introduced new regulatory frameworks for PCET teachers have successfully resolved these issues. I demonstrated in Chapter 6 that the three stage-qualification structure created by the 2001 requirement was particularly unsuccessful. By creating proxies for the different employment statuses of teaching staff, the 2001 Regulation disaggregated a set of standards that had been designed holistically. In being forced to convert the regulatory structure into a three-stage system of ITT qualification, NABs created a huge burden of assessment for trainees. The experiences of trainees on the City & Guilds courses at City College that I reported, illustrated this issue very graphically. Early evidence on the division between the Associate and Full Teacher roles that has been introduced by the 2007 requirement indicates that this distinction too, may prove unworkable. These attempts to impose a national regulatory framework on post-incorporation colleges raise a deeper and more complex issue for policy makers. How is it possible to achieve consistency in the behaviour of incorporated colleges working in a market environment? The senior civil servants, whose comments I reported in Chapter 5, were aware of the inherent problems of regulating ITT in a sector where each college is an independent employer faced with the demand of meeting LSC funding targets, whilst also managing a complex workforce. My research at Provincial College

showed that there was a fundamental conflict between the desire of college managers to get teachers in front of classes to fulfil funding targets and the competing demand of meeting the requirement for new FE teachers to be qualified. As I found, the LSC funding imperative took precedence and the 2001 Statutory Requirement was not implemented.

- The difficulties of relating standards to qualifications and inspection frameworks

Once standards were mediated into qualifications, a whole set of new considerations arose, most critically the questions of academic level, credit and moulding standards to fit the traditions of different awarding bodies. As I argued in Chapter 6, the biggest single issue for National Awarding Bodies was not dealing with occupational outcomes, but relating standards to a QCA credit framework at level 4 of the National Qualification Framework. For HEIs by contrast, the relatively open-ended nature of the FENTO standards, and the relatively permissive stance of FENTO Endorsement, where the emphasis was upon matching the content of qualifications to the standards, allowed greater flexibility. Adjusting their qualifications to the FENTO standards was a more tokenistic exercise that did not fundamentally change the nature of their courses.

When other regulatory bodies such as OFSTED attempted to make use of the standards as part of an ITT (FE) Inspection Framework, the standards went through yet further mediation. Inspectors took the 8 headings from the FENTO standards and employed them as a guide to the capabilities that FE teachers should demonstrate. The many sub and sub-sub standards were largely ignored. Inspectors did however give much greater attention to evaluating the content of the ITT curriculum and the quality of workplace support for trainees. As I reported in Chapter 6, the FENTO standards were mediated into a form that allowed comparability between the inspection frameworks for schools and FE. In effect therefore providers were faced with 2 versions of the standards – the model, used by FENTO and later SVUK for the purposes of endorsement, and a broader curriculum framework used in inspection.

Consumption of the standards in the pedagogical context of FE

Theories of situated learning start from the opposite end of the spectrum from policy makers. Instead of conceiving pedagogy as the transmission of centrally-devised standards and regulations, the dynamics of how learning is woven into the organization and community are fore grounded. Evaluating these situated processes is critical to understanding how semiotic artefacts like standards are actually employed by those for whom they are ostensibly designed. My research findings are congruent with those of the substantial longitudinal project, *'Transforming learning cultures in FE'*. In reporting findings from this research, Gleeson (2005, p.455-6) argues that professionalism cannot simply be imposed through external regulation without taking account of the complex dynamics of teaching and learning in FE:

> "There is a disjuncture between the policy rhetoric of FE as a high-skill vocational route, characterised by greater social justice and inclusion, and the reality as it is experienced by professionals 'on the ground'.... professional knowledge is constructed and sustained through the working out of tensions experienced between external criteria of performance and those 'ecologies of practice' that frame identity and reality making among FE professionals."

- Standards in Expansive and Restrictive Learning Environments

The learning environments in which trainees and teacher educators in my two research sites worked were at different ends of the expansive-restrictive continuum (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). The deliberate structuring of workforce development and the creation of opportunities for participation enabled trainees at City to develop far richer learning territories than most of their counterparts at Provincial College. At City, the ITT team were located in a central college unit with access to senior and middle managers. At Provincial College, the ITT team was treated as an HE course team and was marginalised. Teacher educators were not linked to HR and had no direct contact with Heads of Departments. Given its own internal priorities, City had

already exceeded Government targets for qualified teachers and was structuring the development of its workforce, by building in opportunities for teachers to participate and extend their experience, for example through the process of peer observations. In contrast at Provincial College, the 2001 requirement was seen as an issue of compliance and had not been implemented because of conflicts between releasing staff for ITT and achieving funding targets. My research findings reinforce those of other studies, for example Randle and Brady (1997) that stress the pervasive influence of managerialism in college cultures. This was illustrated most strongly at Provincial College where releasing new staff for teacher training was almost seen as counter-productive; an impediment to the college achieving its funding objectives.

- The marginal impact of standards on learning to teach

Although I found that trainees at City enjoyed much richer and supportive learning environment, it was clear that standards and regulations, at both colleges, were marginal to processes of learning and professional development. Departmental managers had little direct knowledge or interest in the FENTO standards. Their preoccupation was with achieving external funding targets, a preoccupation that reflects the marketised environment in which their colleges operated in which their overriding object (Engeström, 2004b) was to fulfil funding targets. Trainees and teacher-educators often clearly recognised this underlying dynamic and how it fundamentally shaped other organizational processes such as the time other co-workers were able to spend with them, as well as the mentoring support they were able to access.

Given this underlying organizational dynamic, it is unsurprising that trainees and teacher educators at both colleges had an instrumental orientation to standards and regulations. The most perceptive of them recognized that standards had little to do with the practical business of coping with students and surviving in these workplaces. Those that had experienced other professional communities, for example through EFL teaching, recognized the

stark differences between externally imposed codes of practice and those that emerge more organically from cohesive communities. What all the trainees' experience in these workplaces illustrated were the limitations of applying the conventional paradigm of learning based upon the idea of transmitting propositional knowledge to individuals. As Hager (2004) argues in situations where individuals are integrating knowledge so that they can act effectively at the individual, group and organizational levels, the use of propositional knowledge such as occupational standards is severely limited. Whilst both teacher-educators and trainees demonstrated a mastery of standards in that they could demonstrate the relationship between curricula, assignments and the standards, there was no sense of deeper engagement. Standards had not been appropriated in the sense that Wertsch (1996) describes. They were not acting as cultural tools that had deepened trainees' learning or extended their Zones of Proximal Development. As I reported in Chapter 8, as trainees gained more experience of teaching in these complex workplaces, standards became more remote for them; there was a disjuncture between their day-to-day professional practice and the official code of standards.

9.2 Strengths, limitations of thesis and future directions

I will now briefly reflect upon the strengths and limitations of this thesis and its implications for future research. Undertaking the PhD has served as a valuable apprenticeship into different forms of knowledge and research. As I approach the end of the marathon, I realize the many aspects that I would change with the wisdom of hindsight.

The thesis is grounded in my professional experience in working in policy contexts, inspection, HE and FE. In my previous work as an HMI and DfES adviser, I visited well over a hundred colleges and many universities. I have reflected on the differences between knowledge gained from the more theoretically informed approaches of research and the evidence from inspection (see p.116). I have benefited from presenting the conceptual model and initial findings to research groups within the IOE, to practitioners in FE colleges, at a major international conference (Nasta, 2006), to the UCET post-

16 committee and published a journal article (Nasta, 2007) that has attracted much interest. Exposure to debate in these contexts has helped in sharpening the argument and also validated the application of socio-cultural theories to this area. I consider that the breadth of this thesis in tracing the voyage of standards between the policy and pedagogical domains is a positive feature. Drawing upon post-Vygotskian perspectives, it provides a model for evaluating continuing standards-led reforms to ITT and for evaluating how standards are mediated in other public-service contexts. The breadth of focus however, has led to countervailing limitations in depth. In attempting to span the many different contexts where standards are mediated, I have not fully demonstrated the many layers of complexity of these specific contexts. For example, it would have been quite legitimate to have considered FENTO and LLUK as pedagogical sites in their own rights and to have devoted more time to analysing the functioning of these organizations. In describing features of the pedagogy of City and Provincial College, I felt that the evidence I had gleaned could have served as the basis for a thesis in its own right. In presenting my research findings on these pedagogical domains, I did not always achieve what ethnographic researchers would describe as 'thick description' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), narratives which unveil the many conflicting forces present in the mediation process. I am exploring alternative approaches through my continuing research at the Institute for Education. I am now leading LONCETT and researching the initial development of teachers working across the lifelong learning sector in London.

Directions for future research

As I have suggested above, I believe that my overall conceptual model is applicable to the continuing analysis of how the LLUK standards and associated regulations are mediated in the pedagogical contexts of PCET. It also provides a good starting point for a comparative analysis of standards-led reforms in other educational and public service contexts. Future applications of the model would benefit from being combined with more detailed case studies of particular organizational contexts, including those in the policy arena that could have been examined in their own right as pedagogical sites,

so that some of the theoretical resources from it can be developed further. I have stayed within the field of socio-cultural theories in this research. However, I have become increasingly aware of alternative approaches to analyzing standards, especially those that give greater prominence to knowledge conceived in vertical terms of subject disciplines and how it is re-contextualised (Bernstein, 1999, 2000). At an early stage of my thesis, I attempted to integrate perspectives from Vygotsky and Bernstein and decided that this would not add to my argument. I would now like to explore how to link these two approaches again.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Overview of the main research sites, participants and sources of data

Transition point	Main Research sites and participants	Data collection based upon:
1. Development of standards as a mediating tool in the policy context. Focus of chapter 5	Civil service policy teams in DfES including those based in the former post-16 Standards Unit. Officials from FENTO, LLUK and SVUK National Awarding Bodies/NATFHE **Interview Participants** 4 civil servants involved in the FENTO and LLUK phases of reform	Analysis of documentation, (naturally occurring evidence) in the form of standards, qualification frameworks, policy statements e.g. 'Success for All' Supplemented by interviews with key officials involved in the development of standards and the implementation of related ITT reforms
2. Mediation of standards into regulations, inspection and qualification frameworks. Focus of chapter 6	Intermediary agencies – FENTO, LLUK, SVUK, DfES, OFSTED, HEIs and National Awarding Bodies concerned with translating the standards and 2001 and 2007 regulations, into associated qualification and inspection frameworks. **Interview Participants** 1 FENTO officer, 2 LLUK officers 2 City & Guilds officers/teacher-educators at colleges listed in section 3 below 1 NATFHE official/working party	Analysis of documentation, (naturally occurring evidence) in the form of regulations, inspection and qualifications etc. supplemented by interviews with key officials involved in the translation of standards into these artefacts
3. Mediation of standards in the pedagogical context of FE (how standards are interpreted/function in the workplace?) Focus of chapters 7 & 8	Two general FE colleges, one in a predominantly rural area and the other in the inner city. **Interview Participants** **From Provincial College**: 8 trainees (4 pre-service PGCE and 4 in-service PGCE), 2 teacher educators, 2 mentors, 2 curriculum managers, 3 senior managers (HR, Deputy Principal and faculty head) – participation in meetings of ITT team/managers **From City College**: 6 trainees (3 in-service C&G, 3 pre-service PGCE), 3 teacher educators, 2 curriculum managers, 2 senior managers (HR, Director QA/professional development) – participation in meetings of ITT team/managers	Interviews with trainees, teacher-educators, line-managers and mentors in 2 FE colleges, supplemented by analysis of associated organizational, curriculum and assessment documentation and attendance at meetings of college managers and teacher-education teams.

Appendix 2 – Example of approach used for policy interview

E-mail message sent to senior civil servant prior to interview

Dear X,

Many thanks for allowing me to interview you in connection with my personal research linked to my PhD study. I enclose a one-page outline of my research, 'from standards to practice – the case of FE teacher training'. This indicates the focus of the research and the broad issues that I would like to explore.

I thought that it would also be helpful to identify three particular areas that I would like to discuss with you.

1. How you see the role of the post-16 Standards unit within the DfES (comparison with the Schools Standards and Effectiveness Unit) in bringing about change in the learning and skills sector? What do you see as the challenges of influencing policy as an FE professional working within the permanent civil service?

2. What do you see as the issues in defining and implementing standards in the diverse contexts of the LSC sector? (Ideally, I would like to explore your views of this both from the perspective of your current office and your former role as a college principal).

3. What are your perceptions of how FE teachers have responded to the national standards (FENTO and proposed LLUK standards in their day-to-day work)?

The purpose of the interview is to collect evidence for my personal research. Normal research conventions will apply i.e. any comments you make will be entirely confidential. I will send you a transcript for checking after the interview and any quotes from the interview will be anonymous, should I use them in my thesis. I am currently in the middle of my fieldwork and the thesis will not be published for at least two years.

I look forward to our meeting.

Appendix 3 – Setting-up and conducting interviews with trainees

Letter sent to trainees prior to the first interviews

Dear Student

Research Project – Translating Standards into Practice: an evaluation of the effects of the introduction of national regulations and standards on the training and professional development of new FE teachers

I am delighted that you are considering becoming involved in the above research. An outline of the project is attached.

As you will know, the training of new FE teachers has become a central issue for the Government in its drive to improve standards of teaching and learning. It is now a key part of its Success for All Strategy. In September 2001, national qualification requirements for new FE teachers were introduced linked to national (FENTO) standards for teaching and learning. The course that you are taking reflects these requirement and standards.

A central aspect of my research is to find out how new teachers perceive their experiences of initial teacher training and the wider support they receive in the workplace as they attempt to meet the national qualification requirements. Your perceptions about the process of learning to teach will provide vital insights into how national standards are being interpreted and implemented in practice.

I would like to interview students three times over the full academic year, sometimes on an individual basis, sometimes in pairs and probably also as a focus group. I would like to explore many topics with you – for example, why you have decided to teach in FE and how your current role relates to your previous work and life experiences. My aim is to include full-time, fractional and part-time teachers who work in FE and those undertaking both in-service and pre-service courses.

In participating in these interviews you will be reflecting upon your experiences as you develop as an FE teacher. I will prompt you with a series of questions and tape-record the session. After the interviews I will send you notes or transcripts of our conversation. The evidence you collect through this process will provide a valuable record for the reflective journal that you have to keep as part of the assessment for your course. However, any comments you make will be entirely confidential and it will be for you to decide whether you wish to use the material as evidence of your reflections.

Finally, a brief word about me - I am currently undertaking research for a PhD at the University of London, Institute of Education. Like many of you I am studying part-time whilst working full-time as an HMI for OFSTED. Before joining the Inspectorate, I worked in further and higher education for over 20 years and also had a spell as an adviser on post-compulsory education and training at the Department for Education and Skills. I have been interested in FE teacher training for many years. My research raises the broader policy issue of the impact that educational standards in general have as they move from the context of government to the contexts of practitioners. In this sense, FE teacher training is one example of a much wider phenomenon.

If you want any more information about the research and your role, please email me on (xxxxxxxxx). I look forward to working and learning with you.

Appendix 4 - Specific prompts used in interviews with trainees

First interview with trainees – in pairs

Start by explaining the purpose of the interview – refer to the letter you sent, conventions of confidentiality etc. thank them for their help, explain that it should prove both enjoyable and informative.

Question	Concept/Area of interest
1. Tell me about yourself, your background, why have you decided to go into FE teaching (who influenced you, when, why now)?	Biography and learning career
2. What are your initial impressions about what it is like to work in a college? (ask them to put down 3 phrases on a piece of paper – then explore their responses – turn off the tape whilst they are doing this)	Workplace learning - Nature of FE workplace
3. Which staff do you have most contact with on a day-to-day basis (other teachers, support staff, line managers)?	Workplace learning - Informal learning and social networks
4. Tell me about the support that you receive from the college (mentoring, subject contacts, staff room, other facilties)?	Workplace learning – formal and informal systems
5. What do you have to do to pass the ITT course? What do you have to do to meet the standards? Had you encountered the FENTO standards before joining the course?	Trainees perception of the curriculum /learning to teach
6. What standard do you need to reach to pass the course (explore different elements – course work, teaching practice, start exploring the FENTO standards and how they see them influencing their training)?	Trainees interpretation of standards
7. Ask about the role of the reflective diary, what it includes, whether the interviews might prove a useful form of evidence, whether you might be able to look at it later in the year.	Trainees perception of curriculum and standards
8. Conclude by talking about the follow-up to this interview and what you hope will happen over the year (transcripts, contact details etc).	

Appendix 5 - Extract from a trainee's reflective log used as the starting point for third interview with individual trainee

Am I applying FENTO standards in my teaching?

One of Tony Nasta's aims of interviewing PGCE/Cert. Ed students is to ascertain how FENTO standards are actually realised in ITT. I was interviewed on x/xx/xx with another PGCE students and we were asked whether we recognized a set of standards and what we understood by them. The 7 key areas for FENTO standards are given in Reece and Walker (2003:411).

These are;

- Assessing learners' needs
- Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes for groups and individuals
- Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques
- Managing the learning process
- Providing learners with support
- Assessing the outcomes of learning and learners' achievements
- Reflecting upon and evaluating one's own performance and planning future practice.

I had previously considered how we were assimilating the standards in ITT before the interview and identified the following:

1. Each module Learning Outcome (LO) is mapped to a FENTO standard; so assuming that the LO is successful then the PGCE student will have achieved the required standard.
2. Demonstrating the LO with sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding is an indication of how well the standard has been met, but it does not necessarily mean compliance.
3. Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of FENTO standards through modules does not necessarily mean that this fully is applied in teaching practice or in a future teaching career, other than through observation or inspection.

Commenting on (2): A standard cannot be a standard without a precise measurement of what is expected from it; without measurement it can only be a 'requirement'. The 'precise measurements' for FENTO standards actually come from an interpretation by examiners, moderators and the inspectorate themselves. This means that the measure may vary with time and from college to college.

With regard to my own teaching practice, I cannot say that I always carefully consider the FENTO areas before entering a classroom (even when being observed) but reflecting on the titles, I believe that these already have become indigenous to me through the course work, observation and reflection.

Appendix 6 - Specific prompts used in interviews with teacher educators and college managers

Interviews with teacher educators

Question/topic	Area of interest
1. Tell me a little about your background and how you have come to be running the FETT course?	Biography and learning career of teacher-educators
2. Which courses are you responsible for? How much have you been involved in the design of the curriculum (course submission, validation, scheduling and nature of training and assessment)	Curriculum and assessment
3. What do you regard as the important issues in incorporating the FENTO standards into training and assessment (follow-up with references to standards, how the programme was related to the standards and what FENTO endorsement has involved)?	Standards, curriculum and practice
4. To what extent are trainees assessed against the standards? How? When? What issues does this raise?	Standards and assessment
5. Could you describe the backgrounds of the trainees – age, experience and qualifications on entry? What do you think has led them to enter FE teaching?(follow-up with requesting data on trainees)	Trainee biographies
6. Tell me about the wider context of the course – how teaching practice is organised? What support trainees receive from line managers in the curriculum areas? How mentoring operates to support them? How helpful is their practical experience in covering the 8 areas of the standards?	Workplace learning/achievement of standards
7. Conclude by talking about the follow-up to this interview and what you hope will happen over the year.	

Interviews with line managers

Question/topic	Area of interest
1. Tell me a about your role and the teaching staff that you are responsible for (numbers, types – full-time, part-time etc)?	Location in organization/nature of teachers in department/resources
2. How many of your staff are currently taking ITT qualifications (what types of staff, new, experienced, full-time, fractional etc.)? What issues does this raise?	
3. What forms of practical support are provided by you and your department for trainee-teachers (line manager's role, mentoring, role models, remission etc.)?	Workplace learning/achievement of standards
4. Could you describe current college policy on compulsory teaching qualifications for new teachers and how it is implemented (your role, the links with the ITT team)? What are the resource implications of releasing staff for teacher training?	Organizational policies and standards
5. Could we explore the national requirements – the links between the FENTO standards and the qualifications that trainees are undertaking? How familiar are you with the standards? What is your perception of their importance in the development of teachers in your curriculum area?	Perceptions of standards in relation to teachers' development
6. Conclude by talking about the follow-up to this interview – transcripts etc. and what you hope will happen over the year.	

Appendix 7 - Example of a field note kept as part of a personal record of a policy meeting

Notes of Meeting of National Advisory Committee for Education, Training and Development (City & Guilds) of xx xxxxx xx

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The Context

1. This is a committee which maintains an overview of C&G qualifications for FE teachers, trainers and related groups. Oversight of the C&G 7407 teaching certificates falls within the remit of this group.

2. This was my first experience of this group. I truly felt I had entered the world of Quangocracy. Apart from C&G officers, almost all the representatives were from agencies which in one shape or form had a contract with DfES. The image of DfES policy residing in the hands of a murky world of contracted-out bodies kept springing to mind. NTOs were there in force, PAULO (Adult & Community), FENTO, EMPTO (Employment NTO), NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) and other agencies, in receipt of government funding such as the Basic Skills Agency and QCA.

3. Some of the discussion and debate seemed to reflect the dynamics of Quangoland with frequent contributions based upon particular interests such as those of work-based trainers or FE. Somehow the notion of a national strategy for raising standards and increasing professionalism in post-compulsory education and training seemed very distant amongst this welter of sub-groups and vested interests.

Developments relevant to FE Teacher Training

4. C&G is in the last stages of gaining approval for the Level 4 subject specific (Literacy and Numeracy) awards. It anticipates colleges offering the C&G 7407 alongside Level 4 literacy and numeracy awards.

5. FENTO, as part of its endorsement role, carried out an audit of centres offering the C&G 7407 FE Teaching Certificate in the summer term. It has had its endorsement extended one more year. FENTO highlighted the need for better

initial assessment of the needs of trainees, and linked to this, better study support and control over entry standards. This mirrors the findings of the 2003 OFSTED Survey.

6. C&G has recognised the importance of creating access routes into FETT for trainees who lack appropriate HE qualifications. It has created a new certificate, the C&G 7302 Delivering Learning: an introduction at Level 3. It is also continuing to offer its C&G 7307 Certificate in Teaching Adult Learners. The issue of whether the teaching experience of WBL trainers is eligible for a FENTO endorsed qualification has not yet been resolved.

Sector Skills Council for Lifelong Learning

7. A report on the September Windsor Conference which brought together representatives from the following was considered:

higher education (HESDA)
further education (FENTO)
community based learning (PAULO)
libraries and archives (Information Services NTO)
work-based learning (EMPTO).

8. The report which has an 'Alice in Wonderland' feel to it does not give the reader confidence that an SSC will be established in line with the DfES deadline of April 2004. It is interesting to note that few employers were actually present at the consultation. This takes me back to my initial comments about quangoland.

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